Handbook on Communicaiton Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Knowledge ● Technology ● People

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Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance competence.

They draw heavily upon existing literature and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive ‘guides’ or ‘how to’ booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Communication Skills,* focuses on how personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to deal with communication problems in a variety of contexts.

I. Understanding Communication

> "Emperor Frederick - the 13th century ruler of the Holy Roman Empire - wanted to know what language had been spoken at the birth of mankind in the Garden of Eden. Was it Hebrew, Greek or Latin? He ordered an experiment in which the original circumstances would be recreated as closely as possible. A group of infants were to be isolated from hearing human speech from the moment of birth until they spoke their language. The babies were to be raised by nurses who were strictly charged to maintain complete silence when with the babies. The result? Every one of the babies died. The lack of communication can be lethal."
>
> Robert Bolton, People Skills

In the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, the people of the world come together to build a tower that would reach heaven. In a single stroke, their efforts came to naught because they were besieged by befuddled communication, resulting in breakdown of coordination. Intended message is frequently mis-communicated, misunderstood, mis-quoted or even missed altogether because of ineffective interpersonal communication skills.

The ability to effectively communicate with other people is an important skill. Through communication, people reach some understanding of each other, learn to like each other, influence one another, build trust, and learn more about themselves and how people perceive them. People who communicate effectively know how to interact with others flexibly, skillfully, and responsibly, but without sacrificing their own needs and integrity.

Communication is a significant part of a manager's job. In today's team-oriented workplace, the development of good interpersonal communication skills is an important key to success. To build the competence and commitment of employees, a manager has to communicate effectively. Through effective communication, a manager can mobilize the employees behind an organization's vision and inspire a conscious and concerted team effort to attain the vision. The pay-off of effective communication are:

- A more professional image
- Improved self-confidence
- Improved relationships
- Less stress
- Greater acceptance by others

Communication is Transactional

Each person is both sending and receiving simultaneously.

Parties communicating have an impact on each other

Communication is a Process

Changes in events and relationships are part of a continuous flow. Every communication experience is the result of the accumulation of experiences preceding the present one. The new experience affects the future ones.

Communication is Sharing Meaning with Others

A rubber in England is an Erasure but it is a condom in America

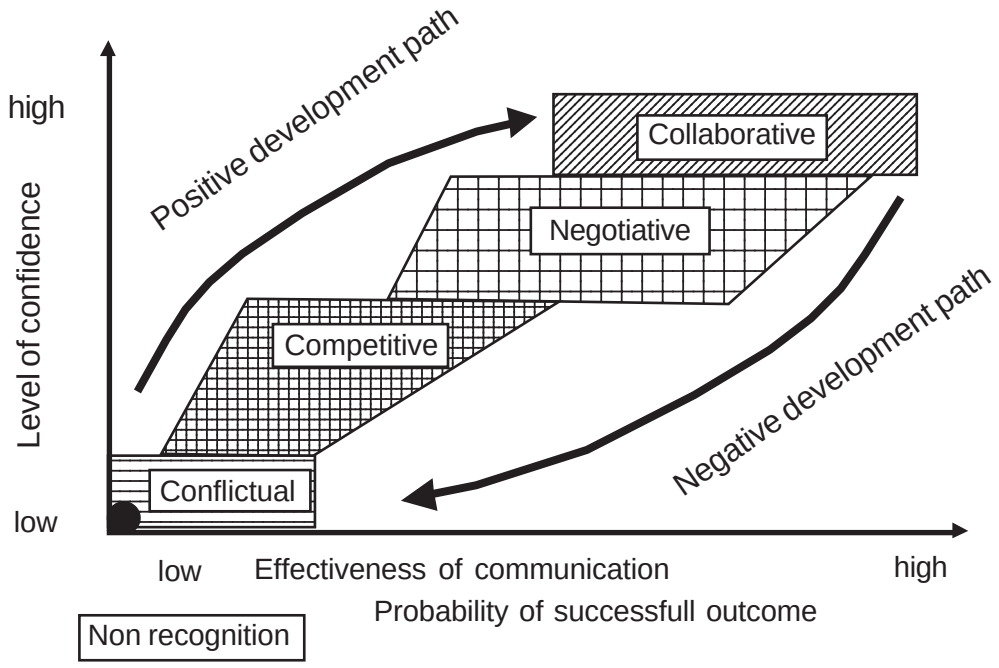
Communication Rights and Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
1. You have the right to be treated with respect.	1. You have the responsiblity to treat others with respect.
2. You have the right to have and express your own opinions	2. You have the responsibility to listen to the opinions of others.
3. You have the right to ask for what you need and want in order to be effective	3. You have the responsibility to acknowledge and address the needs of others.
4. You have the right to set reasonable limits.	4. You have the responsility to respect the limits and boundaries of thers.

II. Workplace Communication Relationships

Effective communication demands that the parties involved in communication have a shared and clear appreciation of the various definitions and parameters about which information is being exchanged. According to Stefano Baldi and Ed Gelbstein ("Jargon, Protocols and Uniforms as barriers to effective communication"): Workplaces are witness to generally five types of communication relationships: Collaborative, Negotiative, Competitive, Conflictive and Non-recognition.

The diagram below illustrates how these are connected to each other and how these relationships are potentially unstable and as a result of which a relationship can develop from one type to another either to improve the effectiveness of communication (the positive development path) or slide into a complete collapse of communication (the negative development path).



Non-recognition relationship blocks any meaningful exchange by refusing to acknowledge that one or more of the players in the desired exchange has no rights whatsoever.

Conflictual relationship is a situation in which the parties recognize each other but are no longer able to work towards a win-win result and resort to verbal abuse and physical violence instead.

These types of relationships present a fundamental obstacle to effective communication. The other three relationships are often of an unstable nature, in the sense that a change in the relationship can be triggered by a relatively minor event – even just one word that is inappropriate at the time - and this can happen very quickly.

In the **collaborative relationship** the needs and positions of all the parties are clearly defined and understood and everyone involved shares the will to succeed, as well as information, equipment, accommodation and logistic arrangements, for example.

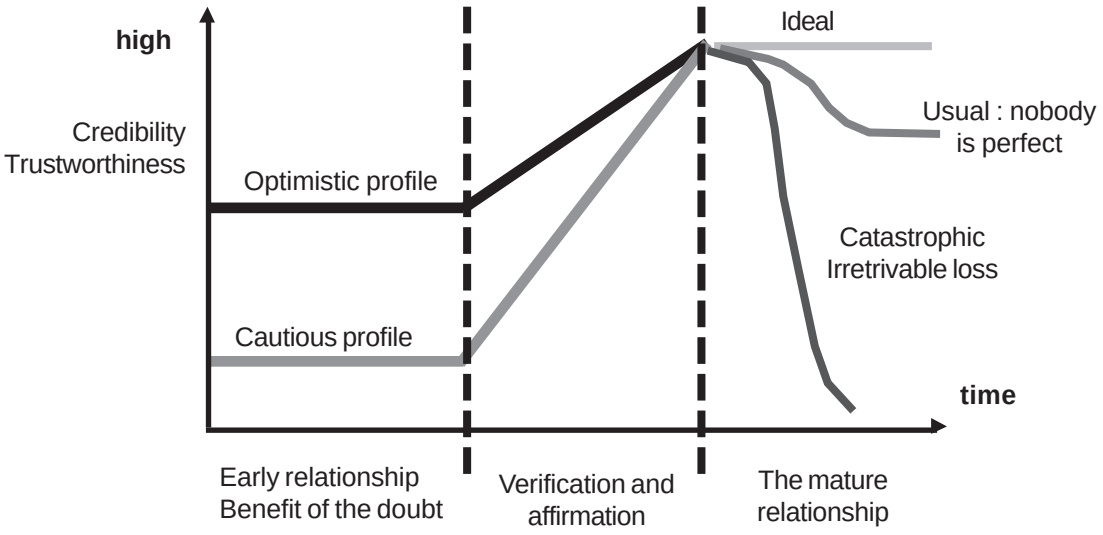
The **negotiative relationship** has much in common with the collaborative scenario except that some needs and positions may not have been defined clearly enough and require discussion and trading to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.

Collaborative and negotiative relationships can quickly become **competitive relationships** when one of the players needs to (or decides to) play a role different from that which was originally agreed upon. This new role could also result in some form of overlap with the responsibilities of others. Another kind of competitive relationship occurs when a “new player” joins an established effort and expects to obtain rights, privileges and concessions from other players. Competitive relationships can, if not properly managed, quickly deteriorate into non-recognition, conflict and exclusion.

At this point, the concepts of credibility and trust become important. Without either of these, effective communication is simply not possible. Neither credibility nor trust is automatically and instantly given – they need to be earned.

The diagram below attempts to show how credibility and trust develop over time. At the early stages of a relationship one's own character will determine that whether s/he assigns the person s/he is dealing with an optimistic profile of credibility and trustworthiness or a cautious profile.

As the relationship develops over time it can follow many different paths – the diagram pictures a happy situation where the credibility and trustworthiness of the person in question actually increases after the early relationship (if only this were the case all the time!) until it reaches a high level denoting a mature and stable relationship.



The one curve that matters in this diagram is the one showing the catastrophic loss of credibility or trust, which is usually irrecoverable, as this implies the end of any meaningful and effective communication.

Four responses or roles that often cause difficulty in communications, as well as in relationships and task activities, are the:

1. **Placater:** The Placater always talks in an ingratiating way, trying to please, apologizing and never disagreeing, no matter what.
    - WITH WORDS the placater always agrees. For example: "Whatever you want is okay. I am just here to make you happy."
    - WITH BODY the placater indicates a sense of helplessness.
    - WHILE ON THE INSIDE the placater feels: "I feel like nothing: without him or her, I am dead. I am worthless."

2. **Blamer:** The Blamer is a fault-finder, a dictator, a boss and always acts superior.
    - WITH WORDS the blamer always disagrees, and says (or seems to say): “You never do anything right. What is the matter with you?” Or, “If it weren’t for you, everything would be all right.”
    - WITH BODY the blamer indicates: “I am the boss around here.”
    - WHILE INSIDE the feeling is: “I am lonely and unsuccessful.”
3. **Computer:** The Computer is very correct, very reasonable with no semblance of any feeling showing. He or she is calm, cool and collected, and is almost totally disinterested and tries to sound intellectual. The computer uses big words.
    - WITH WORDS the computer is ultra-reasonable. For example: “If one were to observe carefully, one might notice the work-worn hands of someone present here.”
    - WITH BODY the computer is stoic like a machine and seems to be saying: “I’m calm, cool and collected.”
    - WHILE ON THE INSIDE the computer may really be saying:“I feel vulnerable.”
4. **Distracter:** The Distracter never makes a direct response to anything. Anything he or she says is totally irrelevant to what anyone else is saying or doing.
    - WITH WORDS the distracter makes no sense and is totally irrelevant.
    - WITH BODY the distracter is angular and off somewhere else.
    - WHILE ON THE INSIDE the distracter may be saying:“Nobody cares. There is no place for me.”

Mutual trust and respect are the foundation for effective communications. When both of these exist, goals can be developed to which all individuals and groups are committed. Communication systems and procedures based on shared goals and developed cooperatively are those most supported, most adhered to, and consequently most efficient.

III. Types of Communication

People in managerial roles have many opportunities to communicate with others. Communication can be classified in the following different ways.

- **Intrapersonal Communication:** When people talk to themselves, communication takes place within the brain. It embraces their thoughts, experiences and perceptions during a communication event. Behavior responses on all other levels of communication essentially begin on intrapersonal level. On this level, the individual forms personal rules and patterns of communication. Intrapersonal communication encompasses:
    - Sense-making e.g. interpreting maps, texts, signs, and symbols
    - Interpreting non-verbal communication e.g. gestures, eye contact
    - Communication between body parts; e.g. “My stomach is telling me it’s time for lunch.”
    - Day-dreaming
    - Nocturnal dreaming and
    - Many others...
- **Interpersonal Communication:** Interpersonal communication is also referred to as *dyadic communication*, or communication between two individuals. This type of communication can occur in both a one-on-one and a group setting. This also means being able to handle different people in different situations and making people feel at ease. Gestures such as eye contact, body movement, and hand gestures are also part of interpersonal communication. The most common functions of interpersonal communication are listening, talking and conflict resolution. Types of interpersonal communication vary from verbal to non-verbal and from situation to situation. Interpersonal communication involves face-to-face communication in a way that accomplishes the purpose and is appropriate.
- **Small Group Communication:** Small group communication is an interaction process that occurs among three or more people interacting in an attempt to achieve

commonly recognized goals either face-to-face or through mediated forms. This is sometimes included in the interpersonal level — the most obvious difference is the number of persons involved in the process. The small group may be a family of three talking at supper, or a meeting of an organization with just a few members.

- **Public Communication or Public Speaking:** The speaker sends messages to an audience, which is not identified as individuals. Unlike the previous levels, the speaker is doing most, if not all, of the talking.
- **Mass Communication:** Mass communication occurs when a small number of people send messages to a large anonymous and usually heterogeneous audience using specialized communication media. It represents the creation and sending of a homogeneous message to a large heterogeneous audience through the media.
- **Non-Verbal Communication:** In non-verbal communication, people send messages to each other without talking. They communicate through facial expressions, head positions, arm and hand movements, body posture, and positioning of legs and feet. How people use “space” also transmits a message. By being aware of non-verbal communication, one can interpret the signals of others, or send signals to others. Awareness of non-verbal communication helps people:
    - Project an image of confidence and knowledge.
    - Demonstrate power or influence
    - Express sincerity, interest and cooperativeness.
    - Create trust.
    - Recognize personal tension in self and others.
    - Identify discrepancies between what people are saying and what they are actually thinking.
    - Change behavior and environment to encourage productive discussion.

Three Myths about Communication

- Myth One: Communication is the magical cure for all our woes - a Panacea
- Myth Two: Communication Can Break Down (here can be a difference of opinion
- but communication cannot break down, machines break down)
- Myth Three: Communication is Merely Skill Building. Communication is a complex process that must be taken and understood as a whole

IV. Methods of Communication

Communication occurs in an organization in the context of people trying to fulfill one or several of the following six needs:

- To feel respected
- To give or get information
- To be empathically understood and respected
- To cause change of action
- To create excitement and reduce boredom
- To avoid something unpleasant, like silence or confrontation

The methods used by them to fulfill those needs include listening, speaking, reading and writing.

1. Listening: Various studies stress the importance of listening as a communication skill. They point out that many of us spend 70 to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of communication. Of that time, we spend about 9 percent writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent speaking, and 45 percent listening. Studies also confirm that most of us are poor and inefficient listeners. Most people listen at an efficiency level of less than about 25 percent. Studies also show that, immediately after listening to a 10-minute oral presentation, the average listener has heard, understood, properly evaluated, and retained only half of what was said.

People generally remember

- 10 % of what they read
- 20 % of what they hear
- 30 % of what they see
- 50 % of what they hear and see
- 70 % of what they say and write
- 90 % of what they say as they do something

Management guru Stephen Covey differentiates listeners as those listening with the intent to reply, and those listening with the intent to understand. Because listening is so vital to workplace success, it is important to take note of the seven “sins” that get in the way of good verbal communication (Dan Bobinski: The Seven Deadly Sins of (Not) Listening):

Sin #1: Filtering

- This is when a person’s mind is sifting through another’s words and tuning in only when he or she hears agreement. Commonly, a Filterer replies to someone else’s statements with “yeah, but….”

Sin #2: Second Guessing

- Someone who is second-guessing usually misses important details because they are too busy (a) imagining someone has hidden motives for saying what they’re saying, and (b) trying to figure out what those hidden motives might be.

Sin #3: Discounting

- This sin occurs when a listener lacks respect for a speaker. What the speaker is saying could be 100% dead on correct, but a Discounter will either internally or publicly scoff at what’s being said, for any number of reasons. The sad thing about Discounters is that they often miss the solutions to the problems before them, simply because they don’t like the source. A milder form of discounting occurs when content is brushed off just because the person speaking is not a good speaker.

Sin #4: Relating

- A Relater is someone who continually finds references from his or her own background and compares them to what the speaker is saying. Relaters often appear self-centered, as everything they hear is publicly compared or contrasted to his or her own experiences.

Sin #5: Rehearsing

- This sin blocks much listening as it is simply waiting for the other speaker to finish what he or she is saying so the rehearser can start talking again. While someone else is talking, the rehearser is thinking about how to say the next sentence.

Sin #6: Forecasting

- Someone who takes an idea from the speaker and runs light years ahead of the topic at hand is forecasting. Forecasting can stem from being bored with the subject matter, or simply because one's mind automatically thinks ahead.

Sin #7: Placating

- Worst of all listening sins, placating agrees with everything anyone else says, just to avoid conflict.

There are a few but effective techniques used in being an active listener. These include verbal and non-verbal techniques. These techniques show others that people are paying attention to them and are interested in what they are saying.

Non-verbal techniques include:

- good eye contact
- facial expressions
- body language
- silence
- touching

Verbal techniques include:

- I'm "listening" cues
- disclosures
- validating statements
- statements of support
- reflection/ mirroring statements

It is very important to use **"I-Messages"** in a support group to convey one's feelings to the entire group. If feelings are not expressed, they are often disguised behind the group. "I-Messages" also provide a preventative focus in that they keep undesirable behaviors in check or they can insure that some things don't happen or get carried away. The use of "I-Messages" may also provide a soft mechanism for confrontation and correction in that "I" is perceived as being softer than "you".

Most of the messages sent to people about their behavior are "you" messages — messages that are directed at the person. These have a high probability of putting people down, making them feel guilty, and making them resistant to change. An "I-Message" allows a person who is affected by another's behavior to express the impact it is having on him or her. This leaves the responsibility for modifying the behavior with the person who demonstrated the behavior.

Active Listening

1. Setting the stage
   - Chosse an appropriate physical environment
   - Remove distractions
   - Be open and accessible
   - Listen with empathy
2. Insuring mutual understanding
   - Reflect feelings
   - Paraphrase main ideas
   - Interrupt to clarify
   - Corfirm next steps
3. Understanding body language
   - Observe position and posturing
   - Make eye contact
   - Consider expression and gestures
4. Suspending judgment
   - Concentrate
   - Keep an open mind
   - Hear the person out

“I-Messages” build relationships and do not place the sender in the position of enforcing a new behavior. Many people have been taught to avoid “I” (as in I want or I would like), so it is often difficult to use this method.

- Four Parts of an “I-Message”
- Specific behavior (“When you . . .”)
- Resulting feeling (“It . . .”)
- Effect (“I feel . . .”)
- Resolution (“So, would you . . .”)

Examples :

- Part 1: “When you cut me off . . .”
- Part 2: “It hurts my feelings . . .”
- Part 3: “I feel as though you don’t value my opinion,”
- Part 4: “So, would you please hear me out.” Since communication is the exchange of ideas or feelings from one person to another, it implies that the message has been heard.

Exercise - Listerning

1. Who are the people it’s easlest to listen to ?

2. What is it about these peope that makes it easler to listen to them ?

3. Who are the people you listen to least ?

4. What is about them that makes if difficult to listen to them ?

2. Speaking: By age sixteen, Washington had copied out by hand, 110 *Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*. They are based on a set of rules composed by French Jesuits in 1595. They all have in common a focus on other people rather than the narrow focus of our own self-interests that we find so prevalent today. Fussy or not, they represent more than just manners. These rules proclaim respect for others and in turn give people the gift of self-respect and heightened self-esteem. When it concerns the manners of speaking, the relevant rules of civility that can be drawn from Washington's book are:

- Be considerate of others. Do not embarrass others.
- Don't draw attention to yourself.
- When you speak, be concise.
- When a person does try his/ her best and fails, do not criticize him/ her.
- When you must give advice or criticism, consider the timing, whether it should be given in public or private, the manner and above all be gentle.
- Do not make fun of anything important to others.
- If you criticize someone else of something, make sure you are not guilty of it yourself. Actions speak louder than words.
- Do not detract from others nor be overbearing in giving orders.
- Do not go where you are not wanted. Do not give unasked-for advice.
- Do not be quick to talk about something when you don't have all the facts.
- Do not speak badly of those who are not present.
- Show interest in others conversation, but don't talk with your mouth full.

While manners of speech matters a great deal in defining the workplace relationships, it is also essential that managers keep in mind that the following ground rules while speaking to their colleagues or subordinates.

- Keep the message clear
- Be prepared
- Keep the message simple
- Be vivid when delivering the message

- Be natural
- Keep the message concise

3. Reading: Good reading habits and strategies help managers handle their tasks more efficiently. Kellie Fowler (Reading Strategies – Mind Tools) offers the following six reading strategies to managers for optimal results:

- Knowing what is needed to be known, and reading appropriately
- Knowing how deeply to read the document: skimming, scanning or studying
- Using active reading techniques to pick out key points and keeping the mind focused on the material
- Using the table of contents for reading magazines and newspapers, and clipping useful articles
- Understanding how to extract information from different article types
- Creating a table of contents for reviewing material
- Using indexes, tables of contents and glossaries to help assimilate technical information

4. Writing: Crisp and correct writing is essential to successful leadership communication. When a letter, report, or program handout includes an error, readers are likely to remember the error rather than the message. The following are some of the principles managers must bear in mind while setting out to write.

- Proof-read aloud *everything*. By reading aloud, your ear will catch mistakes your eye misses.
- Make no assumptions. The ideas you are presenting must be explained in full to be understood. People read only what is on the page.
- Do not lecture. Write only what must be understood to make the proper decision or choice.
- Rough draft all important letters and reports. Check them for content, sequential development of ideas, and conciseness.

- Always put yourself in the “other person’s shoes” and ask yourself, “Would I want to read this letter or report? Why? Does it say something of value and real importance to me?”
- Many people are too busy to read carefully. Be sure your ideas are clear and easy to follow. As a general rule, the most effective manner in which to develop an idea is:

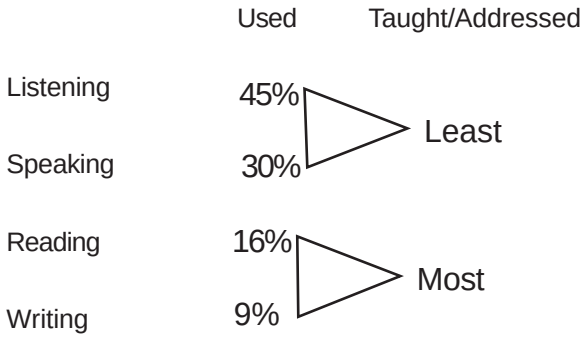
  Concept ☞ Benefit Example ☞ Data

  This method leads your reader to the conclusion you want because the conclusion is already clearly stated as the concept (hypothesis). Your examples and data should support the conclusion you make.

- Define all “terms” and eliminate vague pronouns. These two traps cause more problems in writing than any other set of conditions.
- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling should be perfect. Use a dictionary - either a good unabridged volume or the “spelling checker” version on your computer.
- Plan your time to allow for proofreading and correcting. When your success depends upon the quality of your letters and reports, there are no excuses for ineptitude.

Methods of Communication

80% of working day involves communication



Listening :

45% of Communication
25% Efficiency

V. Communication Styles

Every time a manager speaks, s/he chooses and uses one of four basic communication styles: assertive, aggressive, passive and passive-aggressive. .

1.Passive Style: Passive communication is based on compliance and hopes to avoid confrontation at all costs. In this mode, people do not talk much, question even less, and actually do very little. They usually have a low sense of self-esteem, and have a difficult time recognizing their own needs and knowing how to meet them more appropriately. They internalize discomfort rather than risk, upsetting others. This style tends to result in a lose-win situation, and results in feelings of victimization, resentment, and a loss of a sense of control.

2. Aggressive Style: Aggressive communication always involves manipulation. Managers adopting the aggressive style create a win-lose situation. They use intimidation and control to get their needs met, and they are disrespectful and hurtful to others in communications. They have the underlying beliefs that power and control are the only way to get needs met. They operate from a real sense of inadequacy and may have a lack of empathy for others.

3. Passive-aggressive Style: Aggressive communication always involves manipulation. A combination of styles, passive-aggressive avoids direct confrontation (passive), but attempts to get even through manipulation (aggressive). The passive-aggressive people incorporate elements of both of the previous styles. They try to use procrastination, forgetfulness, and intentional inefficiency rather that being direct in their communications with others. This style of communication often leads to office politics and rumour-mongering.

4. Assertive Style: The most effective and healthiest form of communication is the assertive style. It’s how people naturally express themselves when their self-esteem is intact, giving them the confidence to communicate without games and manipulation.

The assertive people are direct with the goal of creating a win-win situation. They operate from the belief that each person is responsible for solving his or her own problems, and neither party in communication has to justify themselves to each other. They take responsibility for their own decisions and actions.

Understanding the four basic types of communication will help managers learn how to react most effectively when confronted with a difficult person. It will also help them recognize when they are using manipulative behavior to get their own needs met. They should remember that they always have a choice as to which communication style to use. If they are serious about taking control of their life, they should practice being more assertive. It will help them diffuse anger, reduce guilt and build relationships - both personally and professionally.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Watch your body posture – practice using an open, assertive body language and voice.
- Think before you speak. Take a few seconds to make sure you are conveying the right message, and in the way you want to convey it.
- Don’t apologize if it’s not warranted.
- Remember it is ok to say “no”.
- Remember everyone is entitled to an opinion, and don’t try to convince others that

Interpersonal Communication Styles

ISSUE	PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
Self Esteem	Low	Self-centered	Low	High
Impact	Cares more about others	Cares only for self	Avoids consequences; wants approval through minimal effort	Cares about self and others
Consequences & Approval	Predicts disaproval and will not risk it	Not concerned with approval or consequences	Doesn't care about anybody	Predicts approval and positive outcomes; risks disapproval
Meet needs	Own needs not met	Own needs met at cost of others	Needs of neither met	Own needs met but not at cost to others
Mistakes	Blames self	Blames others	Blames external forces; defends self	Owns them non-defensively
Goal Accomplishment	Martyr, self-denying	Uses others	Depreciates self/ others; phony efforts	Self-enhancing; supportive of others
Self Awareness	Sees only weaknesses	Sees only strengths	Sees fate as responsible; no need to change	Accepts strengths and weakness
Trust/Control	Lets others control; distrusts self	Controls others; distrusts others	Distrusts everyone	Trusts
Feelings	Depressed and unexpressed	Explosive and hostile	Expressed indirectly and slyly	Expressed authentically and calmly
Reactions of Others	Pity, irritation or disgust	Anger or fear	Confuses others; generates frustration, anger, distrust	Respect or annoyance

VI. Common Roadblocks to Communication

Communication roadblocks are an inevitable aspect of every workplace. These roadblocks distort the normal flow of communication. The factors distorting the clarity of a communication are called ‘noise’. Noise can occur at any stage in the communication process. Managers should realize the importance of understanding the interpersonal communication process at the workplace, focusing on:

- Communication Roadblocks
    - The way minds work
    - Sender’s behavior
    - Receiver’s behavior
- How to overcome Communication Roadblocks by
    - Listening
    - Reading body language
    - Speaking
    - Skill Training

1. The Ways Minds Work

- **Perceptions of the reality**

Perceptions are the way we interpret and understand reality. Perceptions form one’s reality through the following steps:

People collect information, But:

- They collect only a small amount – they cannot register all the data that their senses can bring them
- They collect selectively – they see what they want to see, they look for data to support their initial assumptions and neglect or donot notice contradictory evidence
- They collect in a certain order

People arrange the information into categories, but:

Categorizing is dangerous, for with categories go a certain set of assumptions or predictions: “Brown-skinned men are violent” “Old people are less ready to change”. These are the stereotypes.

People form our reality, but:

Each of them may have their own reality, very different perceptions and very different realities. These differences often cause misunderstandings and conflicts.

- **Stereotypes and Prejudices**

Stereotyping is a natural function of the human mind, aimed to simplify the complex reality and make our body and mind develop automatic responses to similar stimuli. Stereo means “set image”. When applied to people, stereotyping refers to forming an instant or fixed picture of a group of people, usually based on limited or incomplete information. Stereotypes frequently result from or lead to prejudices, negative opinions about others. Stereotypes and prejudices are sources of communication failures, and more than that, of bad actions and ugly emotions. Prejudices based on oversimplification of people into narrow, negative stereotypes can have tragic consequences such as discrimination and violence.

Often, people are stereotyped around characteristics of:

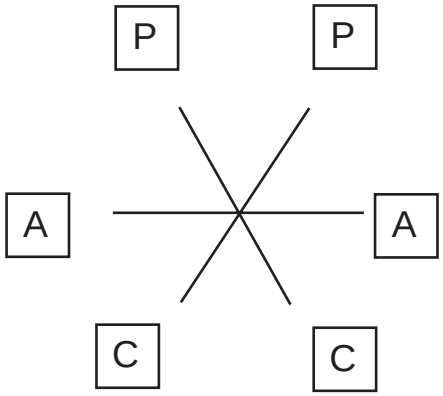
- Age: all teenagers love rock and roll and do not respect elders
- Sex: men want just one thing from a woman
- Race: all Chinese people look alike
- Religion: all those belonging to Islam are terrorists
- Vocation: all lawyers are greedy
- Nationality: all Somalians are poverty-stricken
- Places: all people living in a certain city are lazy
- Things: all Swiss watches are perfect

Stereotypes have four main characteristics:

- They are simpler than the reality
- They are acquired from “cultural mediators” rather than own experience
- They are erroneous by their very nature
- They are resistant to change when absorbed in childhood, stubbornly colouring our perceptions and behavior.

· **Perceptions of relationships**

People can perceive relationships with others based on three metaphorical roles: parent, adult, and child.



If one individual intends to relate to another as Adult to Adult, but is heard as Parent speaking to a Child, the interaction will result in misunderstanding and resentment.

•· **Perspective and meta-perspective two are mentioned here**

There are three levels of thinking that complicate Interpersonal Communication:

Direct Perspective

John does not like Mary Mary does not like John

Metaperspective

John thinks Mary likes him Mary thinks John likes her

Metametaperspective

John thinks that Mary thinks he likes her Mary thinks that John thinks he likes her

Neither wants to hurt the other; rather than communicate openly and resolve the misunderstanding.

- **Gender differences**

Allan and Barbara Pease describe, in their book “Why men don’t listen and women can’t read maps”, in a very funny way a very serious fact: the differences between men and women in the way they communicate. They demonstrate that the differences were forged by the functions men and women had for ages in their effort to survive: men were hunters, focused on their task; women were raising children focused on building and keeping relationships. As a result of these different functions their minds also specialized along those lines and researches demonstrate:

Men’s minds have less speaking centres than women’s

Mothers, daughters and sisters will often speak on behalf of the men from their family: Try to ask a small five year old boy “How are you” and his mother or sister will immediately answer on his behalf “Very well, thank you!”

For the same reason women talk more than men.

“Once I did not talk to my wife for six months – tells a man. I did not want to interrupt her”

A man speaks an average of 2000 to 4000 words/day, a third of the quantity spoken by a woman. This difference becomes visible at the end of the day, when man and woman eat together at home. He finished his words reserve; she still has a lot more. Listen to them, does it sound familiar?

Men interrupt each other when speaking only as a sign of rivalry or aggressiveness. “Do not interrupt me” shout men to women, all over the world in all the languages.

Men’s statements always include solutions to the problems they are speaking about so they feel they have to speak without being interrupted. For a woman this is strange, because her main intention when speaking is to build relationships and less to solve problems.

2. Sender's Behaviour

- **Different meanings of the words**

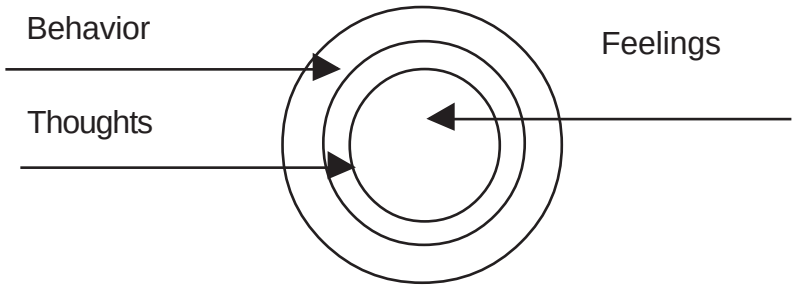
Often people are not able to choose the right word to say precisely what they mean. The same word may have different meanings to different people

- **Hiding Thoughts and Feelings**

Just as military code messages for national security purposes, people may choose to code their messages for personal security purposes; Or because they have been trained from early childhood to express themselves indirectly on many topics and feelings.

One of the basic reasons for miscommunication is that decoding is always guesswork. One can easily observe a person's behavior, hear words and see actions, but:

One can only imagine what the words and actions mean.



A person's thoughts and feelings (emotions) are often concealed very carefully and are not directly observable as behaviors are.

· **The Sender may be blind to other's emotions or blinded by them**

Emotions help shape values. They are a fundamental part of one's motivation and help to determine one's direction and purpose in life. Emotions provide one with needed clues to solve problems.

It is important not be blind and to be able to recognize one's feelings, to be aware of one's rich inner world of emotions. This skill may overcome many communication failures.

3. Receiver's Behavior

- **Hearing through own filters**

i) People have many filters that distort what they hear.

ii) People have attention filters that keep them from being overwhelmed by the increasing amount of sounds and information.

iii) People have emotional filters that block or distort their understanding.

iv) People have their expectations of others that distort their behavior

- **Receivers are easily distracted**

Many receivers are easily distracted and slip off dreaming while the sender is talking. One of the reasons for poor listening is that people can think much faster than they can talk. While people listen, they have a lot of spare time for thinking. The average rate for speech is 125-150 words per minute. This rate is slow for the ear and the brain, which can process about four times more and faster.

- **Reactions that block communication**

Often receivers have ways of responding that are considered by researchers as high–risk responses that are likely to block communication, increase the emotional distance between people and decrease the other person's problem-solving efficiency.

These responses have been divided into three major categories:

- **Criticizing**

Many people feel that they ought to be critical or the other person will never improve. They feel that it is their responsibility to make a negative evaluation of the other person's actions or attitudes.

- **Name Calling**

Labelling, putting down the other person, prevents people from getting to really know the other

- **Diagnosing**

One person informs the other that he is being defensive, or he is acting out of guilt or fear or some other unconscious motives. “I can read you like a book.....” Communication is blocked.

Sending Solutions

- **Ordering**

An order is a solution sent coercively and backed by force. People become defensive and resentful. Ordering might eventually lead to sabotage. Orders imply that the other’s judgment is unsound and thus tend to undermine self-esteem.

- **Threatening**

A threat is a solution sent with an emphasis on punishment that will be forthcoming if the solution is not implemented. Threats produce the same kind of negative feelings to the results produced by orders ‘You will do it or else...”

- **Moralizing**

Many people like to back their solutions with the force of moral or theological authority. “It’s the right thing to do” “You ought to tell him you are sorry” Moralizing fosters anxiety, arouses resentment and blocks honest self-expression.

- **Advising**

The advice-giving trap is a constant temptation when someone talks to you about her problems. What’s wrong with the advice? Often it is seen by the other as a basic insult to his/ her intelligence. It implies a lack of confidence in the capacity of the other person to cope with her problems. And the advisor seldom understands the full implications of the problem. The advisor may be unaware of the complexities, feelings, and many other factors that lie hidden beneath the surface.

Avoiding the other's concerns

- **Diverting**

One of the most frequent ways of switching a conversation from the other person's concern to one's own topic is called "diverting".

Diverting appears when people lack the awareness and skills to listen effectively. At other times diversion appears when people are uncomfortable with the emotions stimulated by the conversation.

- **Logical argument**

When persons are under stress or when there is conflict between people, providing logical solutions can be frustrating. Logic focuses on facts and typically avoids feelings. However, feelings may be the main issues. Using logic, even if really needed, may be a high-risk response-blocking communication.

Overcoming Roadblocks

1. Listening

Since people have two ears and only one mouth, listening might be the most important communication skill. Unfortunately few people are good listeners. Listening is more than merely hearing with our ears. Listening is a combination of what another person says and involvement with the other person who is talking.

Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding, overcoming communication roadblocks. There are five levels of active listening*:*

Basic Acknowledgments: Basic acknowledgements include verbal, visual - non-verbal signs and vocal sounds that let the speaker know how the audience is listening with interest and respect, such as: head-nodding, leaning forward or backward, making eye contacts, "uh-huh", "oh really", "no-kidding", 'tell me more", "I hear you", "so..", "I see", "yes".

Questions: The idea of asking questions may seem contradictory to the idea of listening. But an active listener is asking questions in order to show the speaker his/ her interest (a) in what is being said (b) in knowing more to gain a better understanding of the speaker's point of view. Open-ended questions are preferable to close-ended questions, because they are providing opportunities for the speaker to open up, to explore his/ her thoughts and feelings. It is also important to ask one question at a time.

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing focuses on the speaker's content, and summarizing what was said in order to clarify and confirm correct understanding. The steps of the paraphrasing process are:

(a) Let the speaker finish what he/she wanted to say.
(b) Restate with your own words what you think the speaker has said
(c) If the speaker confirms your understanding continue the conversation
(d) If the speaker indicates you misunderstood ask the speaker to repeat. "I do not understand. Could you say it again?"

Mirroring feelings

Mirroring involves reflecting back to the speaker the emotions s/he is communicating. Do not miss the emotional dimension of a conversation, by focusing exclusively on the content. Encourage the speaker to disclose feelings – may be joy, sorrow, frustration, anger or grief. The reflection of feelings will help the speaker understand his/ her own emotions and move toward a solution of the problem. In order to understand and mirror feelings:

(a) Observe the feeling words the speaker uses.

(b) The speaker may not use feeling words at all because suppression of feelings is so widespread in our culture. Then, focus on the content and ask yourself: If I were having that experience, if I were saying and doing those things what would I be feeling?

(c) Observe the body language, facial expressions, the tone of the voice, gestures and posture.

Reflecting meanings

Once a person knows how to reflect feeling and content separately it is relatively easy to put the two together into a reflection of meaning. It would be useful to use the formula: “You feel (insert the feeling word) because (insert the event or other content associated with the feeling)”

- **Summative Reflections**

A summative reflection is a brief restatement of the main themes and feelings the speaker expressed over a longer period of discussions.

A good summarization may help the speaker have a greater coherence, a better understanding of the situation and draw conclusions.

Effective Listening

Behaviors that <u>support</u> effective listening

- Maintaining relaxed body posture
- Leaning slightly forward if sitting
- Facing person squarely at eye level
- Maintaining an open posture
- Maintaining appropriate distance
- Offering simple acknowledgements
- Reflecting meaning (paraphrase)
- Reflecting emotions
- Using eye contact
- Providing non-distracting environment

Behaviors that <u>hinder</u> effective listening

- Acting distracted
- Telling your own story without acknowledging theirs first
- No response
- Invalidating response, put downs
- Interrupting
- Criticizing
- Judging
- Diagnosing
- Giving advice/solutions
- Changing the subject
- Reassuring without acknowledgment

2. Reading, Body Language

From the very beginning of the human race, non-verbal communication, e.g., body language, has been a means of interpersonal communication and was used long before language appeared. But only in the recent past behavioral scientists started to make systematic observations of what non-verbal signs mean.

In a message, words are effective carriers of factual information. The content of the conversation can be important. But when emotions are engaged they should receive primary attention and they are mostly carried by non-verbal elements. Understanding, being able to read body language is one of the most important skills for effective communication. In order to do it:

Focus attention on the important clues:

The facial expression – especially eyes and vocal expression are eloquent

The tone of the voice gives information about speaker's feelings, anger, boredom, depression, enthusiasm or disbelief

The posture and gestures – movements of the head, legs, and hands reveal the levels of self-esteem and inner energy

The clothing and environment style give clues about personal characteristics

Note discrepancies

When there is a discrepancy between words and body language, both messages are important. Search for the meanings.

Be aware of own feelings and bodily reactions

Non-verbal communications can by-pass the conscious mind and trigger responses. By becoming aware of what ones body is experiencing one becomes more sensitive to what other people are feeling.

Reflect the feelings back to the sender

Read non-verbal signs in the context. Sometimes body language is very clear and unambiguous, but at other times it can be difficult to decipher. But mastering the art and science of decoding the non-verbal signs can improve communication dramatically and overcome many obstacles.

3. Speaking

When sending a message as speakers, people should:

- Know what they mean and express it clearly, with respect and sensitivity.
- Check or build the common understanding of the words they use, because words can have different meanings for different people, especially if coming from different cultures and educational backgrounds
- Use de-escalatory language, resist the temptation to make personal attacks and accuse, by replacing accusatory “you” statements with less provocative “I” statements.

4. Skill Training

Skill-building training can improve communication abilities. Reading this handout may improve your understanding and knowledge of the main concepts. But only reading will not improve your communication skills. A high level of communication effectiveness can be reached only through intensive and well-designed training programs.

Verbal Faux Pas – The Words You Use Can Empower or Confuse

The following is a list of the most common verbal faux pas to banish from your vocabulary:

1. **"Let me be honest with you"**

   (Common variations include "To tell you the truth," and "To be frank with you.")

   Translation: Dishonest Communication. This phrase implies that, up to now, you've been deceitful or haven't been completely honest-that, in some way, you've been holding back.

   "Kinda," "Sorta," "Wanta"

   (Example- "It's kinda hard to share my feelings with her."

   Translation: Uncertainty. These words express your uncertainty and inability to communicate your thoughts. ("I know what I want to say, I just don't know how to express it.") When we communicate, we need to always ensure that we convey a clear message-don't waste words.

   Powerful Choice: Communicate clearly by not using these words. A stronger message is, "It is difficult for me to express my feelings to her because she interrupts me often." This clearer message clearly and accurately conveys your thought.

3. **"I'll try."**

   Translation: Non-commitment. How often have your heard someone say, "I'll try to give you a call next week." Nine times out of ten this will never happen. Why? Because the word try offers you an out which says you're not committed to doing or seeing an action through. So when we say we'll try, what we are really saying is, "Maybe I will – maybe I won't. I'll give it a shot, maybe, and if I don't follow through or fail, don't hold me to it." In life you don't try–either you do or you don't.

4. **“I have to…”**

   Translation: Powerlessness. It’s been said that the only thing we have to do in life is die and pay taxes. Well, this is only partly true, because there are many people who choose not to do the latter. In life, we always have a choice – there is nothing we have to do. We may feel compelled to do something because of our values, sense of obligation or duty. Ultimately, choice is in your hands and saying “I have to…” implies that you have turned complete control of your life over to others. You are dependent upon others to make choices for you. And should those choices fail to turn out well, you have a built in excuse to say, “See what she did to me!”

“You know” or “You know what I mean”

Translation: Confusion

This phase seems common by even the most seasoned speakers, TV personalities, and celebrities. The phrase implies, “It’s obvious what I’m trying to say. I shouldn’t have to say any more-you know what I mean. Can’t you read my mind?” For many, the first thought is, “No I don’t know what you mean, please tell me.” “You know” is a speech filler which gives the speaker time to think about what to say next.

Source: **Joy Fisher-Sykes, www.thesykesgrp.com.**

VII. Criteria for Assessing Communication Competence

Communication competence is the ability to relate to others with accuracy, clarity, comprehensibility, coherence, expertise, effectiveness and appropriateness. It is a measure of determining to what extent the goals of interaction are achieved. However, communicative competence is contingent upon the context in which the interaction takes place. Communication which is successful with one group in one situation may not be perceived as competent with a different group in another situation. McCroskey ("Self-report as an approach to measuring") clarifies that: "The domain of communicative competence includes learning what the available means are, how they have been employed in various situations in the past, and being able to determine the ones that have the highest probability of success in a given situation.

Canary and Cody (Interpersonal Communication) provide six criteria for assessing competence. The criteria include - adaptability, conversational-involvement, conversational-management, empathy, effectiveness, and appropriateness. They are explained in greater detail below:

1. Adaptability: Adaptability is the ability to assess situations and when necessary change behaviors and goals to meet the needs of interaction. It signals awareness of the other person's perspectives, interests, goals, and communication approach, plus the willingness to modify ones own behaviors and goals to adapt to the interaction situation. By mindfully tracking what is going on in the intercultural situation, both parties may modify their nonverbal and verbal behavior to achieve a more synchronized communication process. In modifying their behavioral styles, polarized views on the problem may also be depolarized or "softened." It consists of six factors:

1. Social experience - participation in various social interactions
2. Social composure - refers to keeping calm through accurate perception
3. Social confirmation - refers to acknowledgment of partner's goals
4. Appropriate disclosure - being sensitive to amount and type of info
5. Articulation - ability to express ideas through language
6. Wit - ability to use humour in adapting to social situations; ease tensions

2. Conversational Involvement: Conversational interaction is a factor that determines the degree to which individuals participate in conversation with others. Specifically, receivers of communication differ in terms of their attentiveness and perceptiveness. These parameters influence how information and cues are received from others.

In a study involving 1000 self-assessment reports, Cegala D J ("Interaction involvement: A cognitive dimension of communicative competence. Communication Education") found that approximately 48% of individuals are not generally highly involved in their conversations. He describes perceptiveness as, "the ability to assign appropriate meanings to others' behavior as well as the ability to understand what meanings others have assigned to one's own behavior". Attentiveness is cognizance of another's communicative behavior. Responsiveness is "a tendency to mentally react in a given situation or circumstance and adapt by knowing what to say and when to say."

Highly involved persons are predicted to be more issue-oriented and attentive to the underlying message in the conversation. On the other hand, less involved persons are expected to concentrate on events or surface of the conversation.

3. Conversational Management: Conversation-management is essentially the way the communicators regulate their interactions. It is a matter of knowing the rules of interpersonal communication exchanges and following them. Communication rules are just like other socially conditioned behaviors and are acquired in the same way. What are the rules that an astute and observant communicator knows about to manage interaction?

Wiemann J (Explication and Test of a Model of Communicative Competence: Human communication") mentions the five most common communicative competencies:

1. First, one cannot interrupt the speaker.
2. Second, only one person may talk at a time.
3. Third, speakers' turns must alternate or interchange.

4. Fourth, frequent or long pauses are inappropriate.
5. Fifth, both parties should be assured that the other is devoting his or her undivided attention.

4. Empathy: Empathy, in its broadest usage, is considered a fundamental dimension of interpersonal and communication competence. Empathy is the ability to demonstrate understanding and sharing reactions in any given situation. It is an innate human capacity that gives the ability to understand the unique experiences of another person.

- It connects people with one another on a meaningful and fulfilling level.
- It demonstrates a person's caring attitude toward others
- It helps understand the people better.
- It usually leads conversation towards emotional issues.
- It lets one build a personal rapport with others
- It helps reduce ones irritation with others attitude or behaviour.
- It helps reduce ones prejudice or negative assumptions about others
- It fosters more meaningful, more helpful, closer friendships.

5. Effectiveness: Effectiveness refers to the degree to which communicators achieve mutually shared meaning and integrative goal-related outcomes. Effective encoding and decoding processes lead to mutually shared meanings. Mutually shared meanings lead to perceived intercultural understanding. Interaction effectiveness has been achieved when multiple meanings are attended to with accuracy and when mutually desired interaction goals have been reached. Interaction ineffectiveness occurs when content or relational meanings are mismatched and intercultural noises and clashes jam the communication channels. Communication effectiveness can improve task productivity.

6. Appropriateness: A fundamental criterion for determining communication competence, appropriateness is the ability to uphold the expectations of a given situation. Individuals typically use their own expectations and scripts to approach an

interaction scene. They also formulate their impressions of a competent communicator on the basis of their perceptions of the other's verbal and nonverbal behaviors in the particular interaction setting. To understand whether appropriate communication has been perceived, it is vital to obtain competence evaluations from the standpoint of both communicators and interested observers. It is also critical to obtain both self-perception and other-perception data. Appropriate communication behaviors can be assessed through understanding the underlying values, norms, social roles, expectations, and scripts that govern the interaction episode.

Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC)

The self-perceived communication competence scale was developed to obtain information concerning how competent people feel they are in a variety of communication contexts and with a variety of types of receivers. Early self-report measures of competence were structured to represent what the creators of the measures felt were the components of communication competence. This scale is intended to let the respondent define communication competence. Since people make decisions with regard to communication (for example, whether they will even do it), it is their perception that is important, not that of an outside observer. It is important that users of this measure recognize that this is NOT a measure of actual communication competence; it is a measure of PERCEIVED competence. While these two different types of measures may be substantially correlated, they are not the same thing. This measure has generated good alpha reliability estimates (above .85) and has strong face validity. It also has been found to have substantial predictive validity.

Directions: Below are twelve situations in which you might need to communicate. People's abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot, and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are to communicate in each of the situations described below. Indicate in the space provided at the left of each item your estimate of your competence.

Presume 0 = completely incompetent and 100 = competent.

_____1. Present a talk to a group of strangers.

_____2. Talk with an acquaintance.

_____3. Talk in a large meeting of friends.

_____4. Talk in a small group of strangers.

_____5. Talk with a friend.

_____6. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.

_____7. Talk with a stranger.

_____8. Present a talk to a group of friends.

_____9. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.

_____10. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.

_____11. Talk in a small group of friends.

_____12. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Scoring: To compute the sub-scores, add the percentages for the items indicated and divide the total by the number indicated below.

Public	1 + 8 + 12; divide by 3.
Meeting	3 + 6 + 10; divide by 3.
Group	4 + 9 + 11; divide by 3.
Dyad	2 + 5 + 7; divide by 3.
Stranger	1 + 4 + 7 + 10; divide by 4.
Acquaintance	2 + 6 + 9 + 12; divide by 4.
Friend	3 + 5 + 8 + 11; divide by 4.

To compute the total SPCC score, add the sub-scores for Stranger, Acquaintance, and Friend. Then, divide that total by 3.

	Reliability	*Mean*	S.D.
Public	.72	68.8	17.8
Meeting	.68	68.8	17.1
Group	.67	76.1	14.6
Dyad	.44	81.1	12.4
Stranger	.87	55.5	23.6
Acquaintance	.84	77.4	15.3
Friend	.78	88.2	11.3
Total	.92	73.7	13.8

Public	> 86 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Meeting	> 85 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Group	> 90 High SPCC	< 61 Low SPCC
Dyad	> 93 High SPCC	< 68 Low SPCC
Stranger	> 79 High SPCC	< 31 Low SPCC
Acquaintance	> 92 High SPCC	< 62 Low SPCC
Friend	> 99 High SPCC	< 76 Low SPCC
Total	> 87 High SPCC	< 59 Low SPCC

Higher SPCC scores indicate higher self-perceived communication competence with basic communication contexts (public, meeting, group, dyad) and receivers (strangers, acquaintance, friend).

Source: McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (1988). Self-report as an approach to measuring communication competence.

VIII. Seven Actions for Effective Communication

Communication skills expert Dennis Rivers – author of the popular "The Seven Challenges - A Workbook and Reader About Communicating More Cooperatively" - proposes the seven following actions as essential for effective interpersonal skills.

Action1. Listen more carefully and responsively. Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don't agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view. In order to get more of your conversation partner's attention in tense situations, pay attention first; listen and give a brief restatement of what you have heard (especially feelings) before you express your own needs or position. The kind of listening recommended here separates acknowledging from approving or agreeing. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings **does not have to mean** that you **approve of** or **agree with** that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks.

Action2. Explain your conversational intent and invite consent. You can help your conversation partners cooperate with you and reduce possible misunderstandings by starting important conversations with a stated invitation to join you in the specific kind of conversation you want to have. The more the conversation is going to mean to you, the more important it is for your conversation partner to understand the big picture. Most conversations express one or another of about thirty basic intentions, which imply different kinds of cooperation from your conversation partners. They can play their role in specific conversations much better if you clarify for yourself, and then identify for them, the role you are asking for, rather than leaving them to guess what you want.

When you need to have a long, complex, or emotion-laden conversation with someone, it can make a GIANT difference if you briefly explain your conversational intention first and then invite their consent. Many successful communicators begin special conversations with a preface that goes something like: *"I would like to talk with you for a few minutes about [subject matter]. When would it be a good time?"* The exercise for this step will encourage you to expand your list of possible conversations and to practice starting a wide variety of them.

Action3. Express yourself more clearly and completely. Slow down and give your listeners more information about what you are experiencing by using a wide range of "I-statements." One way to help get more of your listener's empathy is to express more of the five basic dimensions of your experience: Here is an example using the five main "I-messages" identified by various researchers over the past half century: (Please read down the columns.)

The Five I-Messages = Five dimensions of experience	**Example of a "Five I-Message" communication**
1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing?	"When I saw the dishes in the sink...
2. What emotions are you feeling?	...I felt irritated and impatient...
3. What interpretations or wants of yours support those feelings?	"...because I want to start cooking dinner right away..."
4. What action, information or commitment you want to request now?	...and I want to ask you to help me do the dishes right now...
5. What positive results will receiving that action, information or commitment lead to in the future?	...so that dinner will be ready by the time Mike and Joe get here."

At anytime when one person sincerely listens to another, a very creative process starts on in which the listener mentally reconstructs the speaker's experience. The more facets or dimensions of your experience you share with easy-to-grasp "I statements," the easier it will be for your conversation partner to reconstruct your experience accurately and understand what you are feeling. This is equally worthwhile whether you are trying to solve a problem with someone or trying to express appreciation for him/ her. Expressing yourself this carefully might appear to take longer than your usual quick style of communication. But if you include all the time it takes to unscramble everyday misunderstandings, and to work through the feelings that usually accompany not being understood, expressing yourself more completely can actually take a lot less time.

Action 4. Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests. In order to get more cooperation from others, whenever possible ask for what you want by using specific, action-oriented, positive language rather than by using generalizations, "why's," "don'ts" or "somebody should's." Help your listeners comply by explaining your requests with a "so that...", "it would help me to... if you would..." or "in order to... ." Also, when you are receiving criticism and complaints from others, translate and restate the complaints as action requests. ....").

Action 5. Ask questions more "open-endedly" and more creatively. ***"Open-endedly...":*** In order to coordinate our life and work with the lives and work of other people, we all need to know more of what other people are feeling and thinking, wanting and planning. But our usual "yes/ no" questions actually tend to shut people up rather than opening them up. In order to encourage your conversation partners to share more of their thoughts and feelings, ask "open-ended" rather than "yes/ no" questions. Open-ended questions allow for a wide range of responses. For example, asking "How did you like that food/ movie/ speech/ doctor etc.?" will evoke a more detailed response than "Did you like it?" which could be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

Action6. Express more appreciation. To build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude. Because life continually requires us to attend to problems and breakdowns, it gets very easy to see in life only what is broken and needs fixing. But satisfying relationships (and a happy life) require us to notice and respond to what is delightful, excellent, and enjoyable, to work well done, to food well cooked, etc. It is appreciation that makes a relationship strong enough to accommodate differences and disagreements. Thinkers and researchers in several different fields have reached similar conclusions about this: healthy relationships need a core of mutual appreciation.

Action7. Make better communication an important part of your everyday life. In order to have your new communication skills available in a wide variety of situations, you will need to practice them in as wide a variety of situations as possible, until, like driving or bicycling,

they become “second nature.” The seventh action is to practice your evolving communication skills in everyday life, solving problems together, giving emotional support to the important people in your life, and enjoying how you are becoming a positive influence in your world. This action includes learning to see each conversation as an opportunity to grow in skill and awareness, each encounter as an opportunity to express more appreciation, each argument as an opportunity to translate your complaints into requests, and so on.

One deeper level of this seventh step concerns learning to separate yourself from the current culture of hatred, animosity and violence, and learning how to create little islands of cooperation and mutuality.

Some DOs of Effective Communication

1. Analyze the issue at hand thoroughly before developing a plan: Find answers to the following questions (within constraints of planning & budget):

- What is the character and extent of the issue?
- What are the causes of the issue? Try to distinguish technical from human factors.
- What are the targets of the policy?
- What are the possible solutions?

2. Identify the role of communication in an early stage: In many cases this role is regarded after plans are made, thereby, reducing the potential benefits of communication greatly. Even though often communication alone cannot solve the problem, it can be a supporting instrument in most situations when integrated in the strategy during initial planning.

3. Know the target groups and stakeholders: Effective communication requires knowledge of the parties involved. Find out the target groups and stakeholders and study their knowledge, attitude, behavior and interests in the issue at hand. Experience shows that if you don't know the ones you want to reach, chances are high that communication will fail to have the desired effects.

4. Define communication targets: Targets should make clear which results one wants to achieve. It is essential that communication targets are SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**cceptable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime related. Communication targets can range from involvement in problem-solving, to attention, knowledge, awareness, motivation, behavior and skills. In most cases, communication will be used in combination with other instruments to achieve the desired results.

5. Identify partners and intermediaries: In many cases it is costly, complex and time consuming to communicate directly with the target group, especially when a large audience has to be reached and when many different target groups are involved.

Communication in co-operation with partner organizations and through intermediaries can have the following advantages:

- It can be more economical.
- Intermediaries/ partners can have databases with addresses and figures of the target group so they can be reached effectively.
- Intermediaries can have support from a large audience or can have grass root support.
- Intermediaries can have a reliable, solid image for the target group and authority based on expertise.

6. Always pre-test: Ensure that the target group understands the messages and detect unexpected interpretations of your message by pre-testing it. If there is no time, personnel or budget available for a pre-test, conduct at least a 'disaster-check': confronting a small number of people who were not involved in the development of the communication plan.

7. Evaluate results: Evaluation is aimed at assessing the effects of your communication efforts. Furthermore, evaluation can also be aimed at judging the processes during the preparation and execution phase. After evaluation it becomes clear which methods are most effective and most efficient. Furthermore, you learn how you can organize and manage the communication process more effectively in the future. Justification of communication efforts for the leaders of your organization and its' stakeholders is another reason to evaluate. The results of an evaluation will point out which future steps are necessary to be initiated.

8. Define the medium for the message: Since each medium has its own advantages and disadvantages, one should define which medium can most effectively relay messages. For example, the Internet may reach a worldwide audience and therefore may seem to be the perfect medium to reach audience around the world, but the Internet penetration in some countries is low. People who do not have access to the Internet

will not be able to receive the message. TV has a higher degree of household penetration, but most TV broadcasts are local; in this case, TV may be a good medium to reach a wide range of audience within a country, but not worldwide.

9. Establish a budget: Almost everything takes money or staff or support resources.

10. Think creatively: It is a sad truth that while conservation is important, it isn't always interesting. Communicators need to add sparkle dust to bring issues alive.

Source - http://www.iucn.org/themes/cec/principles/donts.htm

Some DONTs of Effective Communication

1. Don’t only send, listen!

When the changing of knowledge, attitudes and behavior is the aim of communication, the ‘sending’ of messages is often the main concern of the communicators. In most cases, listening to the people involved is more important than the sending of messages. One must know the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of the target groups, the language they use and the way they can be reached. This implies that a great deal of listening is an integral part of effective communication.

2. Don’t jump to means

A potential pitfall - which happens frequently - is starting to invest in means before essential questions concerning the strategy have been answered. When this happens, it is very likely that communication efforts will not be effective. There is a high risk that either the wrong people are addressed with the right message or the right people are reached with the wrong message.

3. But don’t over focus on strategies either

Another potential pitfall is the opposite of all that has been just mentioned above, that is, to spend much energy and time on developing a communication strategy, then quickly producing the communication means. This can result in a sound strategy implemented with means which do not appeal or lack the necessary quality to be credible for the target group.

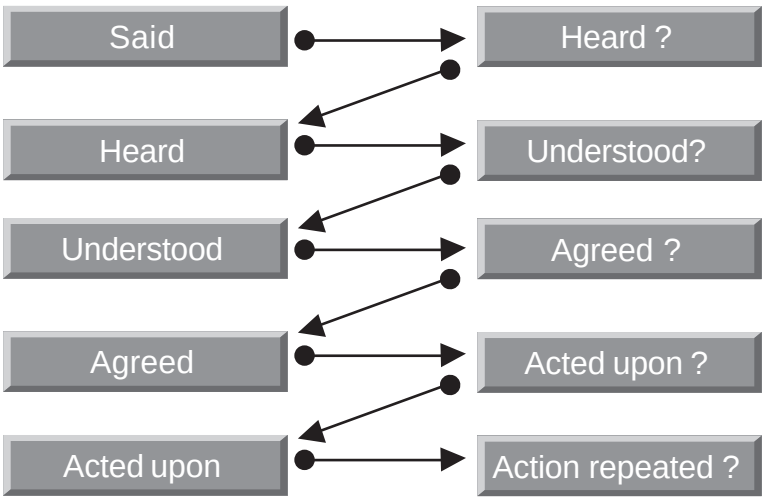
4. Do not disregard communication barriers

Communication seems easy, but experience shows it is actually hard to communicate effectively. Often, ambitions of communication are not met. Even worse, communication can have negative side effects when used in the wrong way.

Why communication does seem so easy? It is our second nature. But often the person or organization that communicates does not realize how the message will be interpreted

by the people for whom it is meant. Even worse, the message often does not even reach the people concerned. There are many potential obstacles in the communication process. Taking these obstacles into consideration, the effectiveness of communication can be increased. The following barriers should be considered when one wants to communicate:

- Said is not necessarily heard
- Heard is not necessarily understood
- Understood is not necessarily agreed upon
- Agreed is not necessarily acted upon
- Action is not necessarily repeated



5. Do not overestimate the potential of communication

Research has shown that the way people perceive situations and problems, strongly depends on their perspective, values and previous experiences. It is also clear that it is often very difficult to change people's perception and that it can be a long term process. It is more effective to regard other points of view as valuable instead of 'untrue'. Communicators should realize that in some situations the changing of perceptions is unrealistic or may have negative side effects. If this is the case, the perception of the people involved should be regarded as 'reality'.

6. Do not underestimate the potential of communication

It is impossible to ‘not communicate’. If for instance a new industrial plant is installed without communication with people living in the area, the message they will get might be: ‘we are ignored, they don’t value our opinions, they just do as they like’.

Source - http://www.iucn.org/themes/cec/principles/donts.htm

Building Effective Interpersonal Communication Skills: Self-Assessment Exercise

In today's team-oriented workplace, the development of good interpersonal communication skills is an important key to success.

The following self-assessment exercise is designed to help you evaluate your own interpersonal communication skills and style, and provide you with helpful tips for becoming a good communicator - and team player!

(Source: Building Effective Interpersonal Communication Skills –Robin Jacobs – Guide for Job Seekers & Employees)

Communication Skills Self-Assessment Exercise

In each of the following, read items A, B, and C, then mark the one that best describes your communication style. (24 total)

1. _____ A. When conversing with others, I usually do most of the talking.

_____ B. When conversing with others, I usually let the other person do most of the talking

_____ C. When conversing with others, I try to equalize my participation in the conversation.

Best answer: c. Conversations should be a balanced two-way flow of dialogue.

2. _____ A. When I first meet someone, I wait for the other person to make the introduction first.

_____ B. When I first meet someone, I introduce myself with a smile and offer a handshake.

_____ C. When I first meet someone, I greet the person.

Best answer: b. It's good to initiate the conversation by introducing yourself with a handshake and smile. If shaking hands is difficult, a quick head nod is a good

substitute. Initiating the introduction with a smile and handshake (or head nod) helps build rapport.

3. _____ A. I usually "warm-up" new conversations with small talk

_____ B. I usually avoid small talk and jump into more important matters.

_____ C. I usually avoid starting conversations.

Best answer: a. It's good to initiate conversations with small talk. Topics to warm-up the conversation might include a chat about the weather, news of interest, or impressions about the current activity (if you're at a meeting, staff party, or other gathering, for example).

Examples of conversation starters might be:

"It's sure warm today, isn't it?"

"Did you hear about the big accident on the freeway? Traffic's backed-up for miles."

"What did you think about the Blazers game last night?"

"This is a nice party, isn't it?"

"Could I get you something to drink?"

4. _____ A. I make an effort to remember and use peoples' names.

_____ B. I don't pay attention to names as I tend to forget them.

_____ C. I only learn the names of important people.

Best answer: a. It's good to call people by name whenever possible. It makes a good, lasting impression, and it makes the other person feel important and special. To help remember names, try these techniques:

Repeat: After the person tells you his or her name, immediately use it several times in the conversation.

"It's nice to meet you, Bob."

"I agree with you, Bob."

"That was a great joke, Bob!"

Associate: Associate the person's name to something unique and special. You might:

Associate the person's name with a **unique feature** about

the person. For example:

Think - "Jack tells funny jokes."

Think - "JJ" - Joking Jack

Associate the name with a **visual picture**. For example:

"Sandy" - visualize a sandy beach.

"Glenn" - visualize John Glenn launching into space.

Associate the name with a **personal connection**.

For example:

"Brian" - My uncle's name is Brian.

"Lucy" - I had a turtle named Lucy.

Jot: Jot the person's name down with an identifying description that will help jog your memory later. For example:

"Chuck" - tall; glasses; works in Accounting; has twin sister; runs marathons; new to Portland.

5. _____ A. I frequently use courtesy words and phrases - "Please," "Thank you," "You're welcome," "I'm sorry."

_____ B. I occasionally use these courtesy words and phrases.

_____ C. I never use these courtesy words and phrases.

Best answer: a. Regular use of these courtesy words and phrases is important to show politeness and build rapport.

6. _____ A. I tend to be serious and don't smile often while conversing.

_____ B. I smile all the time while conversing.

_____ C. I smile at appropriate times while conversing.

Best answer: c. Smiling when greeting people and at appropriate times greatly helps build rapport.

7. _____ A. I make eye contact while conversing.

_____ B. I sometimes make eye contact while conversing.

_____ C. I never make eye contact while conversing.

Best answer: a. Making eye contact is important for building rapport. It gives the impression you're interested and engaged in the conversation, and you have good self-confidence.

Eye contact should include frequent breaks to avoid staring (this can make the other person uncomfortable). Break eye contact frequently - glance down to the side, then quickly make eye contact again. Glancing down to the side is important. If you instead glance to the side (as if looking out the window, for example) or look up, it gives the person the impression you're distracted and not paying attention to what's being said. This quickly breaks down rapport.

8. _____ A. While conversing, I hold my head still at all times.

_____ B. While conversing, I nod my head at appropriate times.

_____ C. While conversing, I nod my head constantly.

Best answer: b. Occasionally nodding your head to indicate you agree or understand helps build rapport. Again, it shows you are interested and engaged in the conversation.

9. _____ A. While conversing, I stand one-foot away from the person.

_____ B. While conversing, I stand two- to three-feet away from the person.

_____ C. While conversing, I stand five- to six-feet away from the person

Best answer: b. Your arm's length is the appropriate distance (between two- to three-feet). Standing closer than arm-length makes the other person feel uncomfortable (or feel threatened) but standing further away from the other person breaks down rapport.

10. _____ A. I often stand while talking to a person who is sitting.

_____ B. I often sit while talking to a person who is sitting.

_____ C. I often lean down while talking to a person who is sitting.

Best answer: b. Communicating at eye level helps build rapport. So, if the person is sitting and a chair is available, take a seat! There's one exception - If you walk into your supervisor's office or co-worker's office, it's best to ask the supervisor or co-worker if you can sit down first. Even better, wait for an invitation to sit. The person may not have time to talk at that moment.

11. _____ A. To end a conversation, I often just leave.

_____ B. To end a conversation, I begin to look impatient hoping the person will get the hint.

_____ C. To end a conversation, I wrap up with a closing statement.

Best answer: c. It's best to bring the conversation to an end by making a polite closing comment or gesture. Good closing (wrap-up) comments might be:

"I've enjoyed talking with you."

"Let me give you my business card."

"Well, I need to go speak with...."

"Do you know a person I can contact?"

12. _____ A. If a colleague has put on weight, I say nothing about it.

_____ B. If a colleague has put on weight, I tell the person that he or she has changed in appearance.

_____ C. If a colleague co-worker has put on weight, I honestly tell the person that he or she looks fat.

Best answer: a. It's best to say nothing. Never say anything that might hurt or offend the person. It's called being tactful. It's always best to give compliments only, and only say things that will make the person feel good.

"I like your dress."

"That's a nice shirt."

13. _____ A. When I'm listening to the speaker, I often cross my arms over my chest.

_____ B. When I'm listening to the speaker, I often lean back and turn my body away from the speaker.

_____ C. When I'm listening to the speaker, I often lean slightly forward and face my body toward the speaker.

Best answer: c. Leaning slightly forward and facing the speaker shows you're interested, and it helps build rapport. Sitting with your arms crossed over your chest gives the message you are defensive. Leaning back with your body or turning your body away from the speaker gives the message that you are bored, disinterested, or feel in charge. Such body language breaks down rapport.

14. _____ A. When I cross my leg, I cross my leg facing the speaker.

_____ B. When I cross my leg, I cross my leg away from the speaker.

_____ C. When I cross my leg, I bob my foot.

Best answer: a. Crossing your leg toward the speaker shows you're interested, and it builds rapport. Crossing your leg away from the speaker gives the message that you are defensive, disinterested, or feel in charge. In essence, you are putting up a subtle barrier. And if you bob or swing your foot, you're sending the message that you're anxious or nervous!

15. _____ A. While listening, I tend to be distracted by things going on around me.

_____ B. While listening, I listen for meaning and ask questions.

_____ C. While listening, I watch the person speak, but I don't "hear" a word.

Best answer: b. If you're a good listener, you keep mentally busy searching for meaning in the message, and you ask questions. This mental "search for meaning" helps keep you focused, attentive, and engaged. If you get easily distracted, try taking notes if the setting is appropriate. Note-taking helps draw and focus your attention as you must mentally "search for meaning" and listen for information in order to take notes. This might be helpful in meetings, for example.

If you watch someone speak but you don't "hear" a word, gauge if you are bored, tired, might have a gap between your speaking and listening rates, or are experiencing "emotional deafness." We all experience emotional deafness on occasion, especially when we're feeling overwhelmed, upset, or nervous.

You hear people ask - "I'm sorry, what did you say?" or make the comment - "I have a lot on my mind right now. Could you repeat what you said?" If it's a frequent problem, gauge the source and seek help if needed.

16. _____ A. When someone talks about an unfortunate or sad experience, I don't comment about it.

_____ B. When someone talks about an unfortunate or sad experience, I try to change the subject.

_____ C. When someone talks about an unfortunate or sad experience, I try to relate to the person's feelings and show sensitivity to his or her misfortune.

Best answer: c. Showing empathy (sensitivity) to another person's feelings helps build rapport. It's called "reaching out to people." Empathy can be shown by making comments, such as:

"That must have been a scary (or upsetting) experience for you."

"I felt the same way when that happened to me."

"I know (understand) how you feel."

"I can imagine how you feel."

"I would feel that way too in your situation."

17. _____ A. When I discuss a topic, I tend to talk about and focus on positive (good) aspects.

_____ B. When I discuss a topic, I tend to talk about and focus on the negative (bad) aspects.

_____ C. When I discuss a topic, I tend to complain.

Best answer: a. Focusing on the positive (good) aspects draws people's attention in a favorable way, and people enjoy the conversation more. People are generally more attracted to a person who has a "positive outlook on life." And when it comes to work evaluations, positive-minded people generally do better. Consider the following examples:

Positive: "The plan has some good ideas."
Negative: "The plan has some serious problems."
Complaint: "No one ever listens to my ideas."

Positive: "These changes might have some benefits."
Negative: "These changes would be awful."
Complaint: "I always have to rel-earn and re-do everything around here."

18. _____ A. When I have a negative opinion or comment, I just say it.

_____ B. When I have a negative opinion or comment, I lead in with a positive comment first.

_____ C. When I have a negative opinion or comment, I say nothing.

Best answer: b. It's best to say something positive first, and then express a negative opinion or comment in a tactful way. Consider these examples:

Positive lead:

"I like many aspects of your idea *(positive lead)*, but it may not work well for this department." *(tactfully stated)*

Interpretation: The idea won't work.

Positive lead:

"You did a nice job setting the bread plates and glasses *(positive lead),* but the forks need to be placed to the left." *(tactfully stated)*

Interpretation: The forks are in the wrong place.

Positive lead (with empathy):

"I know you worked a long time on this *(positive lead),* but it would look better retyped." *(tactfully stated)*

Interpretation: It needs to be retyped.

19. _____ A. When I receive unfavorable feedback, I note where I need to improve.

_____ B. When I receive unfavorable feedback, I get angry and defensive.

_____ C. When I receive unfavorable feedback, I deny the problem, make excuses, or plead ignorance.

Best answer: a. When you receive feedback, it's important to know what you do well, but it's equally important to know where improvements can be made to increase your chances for success. Few people do everything well, and you've undoubtedly heard the saying - "No one is perfect." Simply make note of "weak" areas (we all have them!) and make changes needed. Receiving honest feedback is truly "a gift." It usually means someone cares and wishes to see you succeed.

20. _____ A. When I give a person negative feedback, I focus on the person's observable work or behavior and offer suggestions.

_____ B. When I give a person negative feedback, I focus on what I don't like about the person.

_____ C. When I give a person negative feedback, I simply tell the person what to do right.

Best answer: a. When you give negative feedback, you should focus on and communicate your observations of the person's work or behavior, not focus on nor judge the person. Focus on performance, not personality (or personal traits). After sharing your observation about the person's work or behavior, offer a suggestion in a tactful way. Consider these examples:

Example 1:

"The forms you completed were thoroughly done *(positive lead),* but I notice *(observation)* there are a few spelling errors *(work feedback).* Perhaps they can be corrected with correction fluid *(suggestion)."*

Important: Notice it says - "…there are a few spelling errors" instead of - "you made a few spelling errors." Leave out "you" whenever possible.

Example 2:

"Your presentation covered the main points very well *(positive lead),* but I noticed *(observation)* contact information was left out *(work feedback).* I wonder if it might be good to include a contact name and phone number *(suggestion).*"

Notice it says - "…contact information was left out" instead of - "you left out contact information." It avoids using "you."

Example 3:

"I like your ideas *(positive lead),* but it appears *(observation)* the delivery (communication style or behavior) weakens them. Perhaps they could be written down and handed out to everyone to review *(suggestion).*

Notice it says - "…the delivery weakens them" instead of - "you weaken them." It avoids using "you."

21. _____ A. When I give a person negative feedback, I do it around others so everyone can hear.

_____ B. When I give a person negative feedback, I do it in front of the supervisor.

_____ C. When I give a person negative feedback, I talk with the person alone in a private place.

Best answer: c. It's always best to meet the person privately and away from other people so others can't hear.

22. _____ A. When I disagree with a person, I listen first, ask questions for clarification, then disagree non- judgmentally.

_____ B. When I disagree with a person, I quickly point out the person is wrong and why.

_____ C. When I disagree with a person, I say little or nothing.

Best answer: a. It's fine to disagree, but it's important to **disagree agreeably**. This means you should:

1) show respect for the other person's ideas,
2) listen attentively until the person is done,
3) ask questions if needed,
4) disagree non-judgmentally, and, if possible,
5) offer an alternative solution.

Consider these examples:

"I respect your view, John, *(shows respect)* but I think the problem is due to a lack of time *(point of disagreement).* One way to solve the problem might be to computerize repair reports *(offered solution).*"

"I hear what you're saying *(shows respect),* but it seems the staff would do better, not worse, with flextime schedules *(point of disagreement).* I would

suggest we try it for six months *(offered solution).*"

23. _____ A. When I'm in a group, I tend to frown a lot.

_____ B. When I'm in a group, I tend to smile and use humor at appropriate times.

_____ C. When I'm in a group I tend to be serious.

Best answer: b. At appropriate times, it's always good to smile. And when used at appropriate times and in appropriate ways, humor is beneficial for group dynamics. Humor helps "break the ice" when people first meet. Humor helps relieve stress and tension. A humorous observation and comment helps lower the heat when a heated discussion gets too "hot." And most importantly, humor helps build team cohesiveness.

If you observe people at a gathering, you'll notice people naturally gravitate toward people considered "approachable." Approachable people are the ones who smile; they are the ones who add humor and lightness to conversations; and they are the ones who make fun of themselves in a self-deprecating and humorous way. In any group setting, smiles attract, and humor bonds people together. Do you know a good joke?

Idea: If you're like many people who have difficulty remembering humorous lines, puns, anecdotal stories, or jokes, consider creating a *humor file.* Clip and save humorous jokes, stories, and puns from the newspaper. Write down and save jokes and funny stories you hear. Your file will be a good resource to draw from for upcoming social events and gatherings.

This last item has four choices (A, B, C or D). Which one best describes you?

24. _____

_____A. I'm a "hands-on" person. I tend to:

- prefer hands-on experiences and activities;
- focus on tasks to be done;
- refrain from discussions;
- think in a logical and organized way;
- do things in an orderly way;
- have difficulty adjusting to change.

___ B. I'm a "thinker." I tend to:

- enjoy listening to a logical presentation of ideas;
- enjoy analyzing problems and finding systematic ways to solve problems;
- enjoy creating models based on theory and information;
- like structure and organization;
- act slowly in making decisions;
- show more interest in ideas than people.

_____ C. I'm an "explorer." I tend to:

- try things by trial and error;
- explore practical uses for ideas and theories;
- make decisions that provide quick solutions;
- decide quickly;
- take risks;
- enjoy change;

_____ D. I'm a "free thinker." I tend to:

- base views and opinions on feelings;
- enjoy tossing around ideas (brainstorming);
- approach and view problems and experiences from different perspectives;
- rely on intuition, not logic, for making decisions;
- dislike structure.

Best answer: The one that fits you! The four choices above describe and identify four communication (and *learning*) styles, and no one style is better than the other. This part of the exercise merely serves to illustrate how people can (and do) think, act, learn, and communicate differently. Each person in a group may have a different style.

How well you are able to recognize, respect, and adjust to other people's way of communicating and "doing things" is a key to success when working with a supervisor, group of people, or class instructor.

For example, if you are a "free thinker" - you like to brainstorm ideas and do what "feels right" - you might find it frustrating working with (or learning from) "thinker" - a person who focuses on and approaches tasks and ideas based n logic, reasoning, and organized structure. The "thinker" would be equally frustrated working with a person or group that loosely brainstorms ideas all afternoon.

How successfully "opposites" work together largely depends on how willing and well each person is able to adjust to the other's style. Flexibility and compromise are key. If you find yourself working with a supervisor, co-worker, team player, or instructor who has a style that differs from your own, recognize and respect the other person's individual style, and learn to accommodate the person's style as much as possible.

How to accommodate a “hands-on” style

- arrive promptly;
- pay very close attention to deadlines;
- don’t procrastinate or made excuses;
- be organized;
- accept structure;
- try to do things in an exact and precise way;
- make brief and “to-the-point” comments (don’t ramble);
- minimize discussion - get to the task;
- ask questions in a brief, concise way;
- use concrete terms and explanations (not abstract);
- do things in sequential and orderly steps;
- discuss and show practical applications;
- demonstrate to illustrate an idea or point;
- allow for “hands-on” project-type tasks

How to accommodate a “thinker” style

- arrive promptly;
- pay very close attention to deadlines;
- don’t procrastinate or make excuses;
- be organized;
- use outlines, charts, graphs, and spatial mapping to show information and the relationship of ideas;
- provide data;
- provide documentation;
- be open to the use of abstract explanations and terms;
- support information with facts (proof);
- support views and opinions with logic and evidence;
- focus on main ideas, related details, and logical conclusions;
- be open to topics that allow for debate;

- be patient with quick and sudden moves from idea to idea; allow for re-search-type tasks.

How to accommodate an “explorer” style

be open to new ideas;
be open to change;
allow room for creative innovation;
be open-minded to opinions and views;
be attentive;
show interest;
relate ideas to the real world (use real world examples);
focus on processes and applications rather than facts;
be willing to take a risk or investigate;
be be patient with disorganization;
share humor and laugh at jokes;
be patient when jumps from one idea to another;
be willing to discuss ideas;
allow for innovative- and creative-type tasks.

How to accommodate a “free thinker” style

smile and be friendly;
be willing to chat and visit;
share personal experiences;
participate in discussions and activities;
lean forward - be attentive and show interest;
use gestures and positive body language;
use humor;
be sincere;
use images, pictures, and color;
apply personal meaning to ideas;
show how ideas and details apply to life;
show interest and concern for people;
be patient if describes extensively;
avoid questioning or challenging the person’s insight or logic;
be patient with interruptions;

be open to use of metaphoric language and expression;
don't force structure - allow room for flexibility;
allow for interactive-type tasks.

Suggested Readings

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http://www.iucn.org/themes/cec/principles/donts.htm

Handbook on Time Management Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE
Knowledge • Technology • People

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Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive ‘guides’ or ‘how to’ booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Time Management Skills,* focuses on how the personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to effectively deal with time management problems in a variety of contexts.

1 Introduction

Understanding Time Management

> "We all have time to either spend or waste and it is our decision what to do with it. But once passed, it is gone forever."
>
> - Bruce Lee ("Zen in the Martial Arts" by Joe Hyams)

Every individual on earth has the same amount of time - 60 seconds in a minute; 60 minutes in an hour; 1,440 minutes in a day; and 525,600 minutes in a year. While a vast majority of people confesses faltering to come to grips with it, extremely few can claim to have made the most of it. How is it that they have got it all done? It's because they have managed a way to figure out how to manage their time effectively.

Time Management is more than just managing time. It is about controlling the use of the most valuable - and undervalued - resource. It is managing oneself in relation to time. It is setting priorities and taking charge of the situation and time utilization. It means changing those habits or activities that cause waste of time. It is being willing to adopt habits and methods to make maximum use of time.

With good time management skills one is in control of one's time, stress and energy levels. One can maintain balance between one's work and personal life. One finds enough flexibility to respond to surprises or new opportunities. It is not how much time one has, but rather the way one uses it. The bottom line is how well one manages time.

Internationally known authority on time management Dr. Alec Mackenzie in his book *The Time Trap* argues that the very idea of time management is a misnomer because one really cannot manage time in the way other resources can be managed: financial capital, physical capital, human capital, information and time. While each of the first four can be augmented, reduced, transferred or otherwise controlled, Time cannot be manipulated. Dr. Mackenzie contends that when it comes to time, one can only *manage oneself* in relation to it. One cannot control time as one can control other resources – one can only control how one *uses* it. In the world in which we live, time cannot be replaced or re-created. It is therefore not for us to choose whether we spend or save time but to choose only *how* we spend it.

2 Misconceptions about Time

There are several misconceptions which we all have about time. They affect everyone including those persons who may be considered quite successful and effective. Here are some of the misconceptions identified by Dr. Mackenzie:

- **Time management is simple - all it requires is common sense.** While it is true that the concept is simple, the self-discipline required to practice effective time management is not easy.
- **Work is best performed under pressure.** Psychological studies show this to be no more than an excuse for procrastination. One does not work well under pressure - only does the best one can under the circumstances. Pressure and challenge must not be confused. Lara's performance when the West Indies Team is in trouble has more to do with application and determination rather than pressure.
- **I use a diary, a to-do list and have a secretary to keep me organized.** One has to keep oneself organized - no one can do it for others. The trouble with the disorganized person is that he hardly has time to listen to his secretary or look at his diary.
- **I do not have the time.** The effective worker or manager often gets more work done in the first earlier hours of the morning than most laggards get done in the whole day. He then no longer has to work against tight deadlines and under stress which contributes to heart problems and not unusually the ultimate reduction of time on this earth.
- **Time management might be good for some kinds of work but my job is creative**. Time management is not about routine: it is about self-discipline. Lack of discipline prevents one from being great instead of simply good.

Time management takes away the fun and freedom of spontaneity. But is working under stress, forgetting appointments, making constant excuses and apologies to be fun? Would it not be much more fun if by better organization one had one or two more hours every day to spend with the family, to play games, read a good book, plan for tomorrow and the day and week after or just relax?

3 Symptoms of Poor Time Management

Poor time management shows up by way of one or a combination of typical perceptible symptoms. Managers would do well to look for and reflect on whether they are subject to any of those symptoms with a view to take necessary corrective actions.

The following are some of the indicators of poor time management:

- **Constant rushing** (e.g. between meetings or tasks)
- **Frequent delays** (e.g. in attending meetings, meeting deadlines)
- **Low productivity, energy and motivation** (e.g. 'I can't seem to get worked up about anything')
- **Frustration** (e.g. 'Oh, things just don't move ahead)
- **Impatience** (e.g. 'where the hell is that information I've asked him for?')
- **Chronic vacillation between alternatives** (e.g. 'whichever option I choose it is going to put me at a big disadvantage. I don't know which way to jump')
- **Difficulty setting and achieving goals** (e.g. 'I'm not sure what is expected of me')

Why do/will I have so little time ?

- Management by crisis
- Lack of Planning
- Incomplete information
- Personal disorganization
- Attempting too much
- Inability to Say No
- Responsibility unclear
- Ineffective delegation
- Inadequate staff & resources
- Paperwork
- Poor communication
- Poorly organized meetings
- Leaving tasks unfinished
- Inadequate controls
- Lack of self-discipline
- Socializing
- Drop-in visitors
- Telephone interruptions

4 The Eleven Time Thieves

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore (“Time Thieves: The 11 Biggest Time-wasters Revealed”) lists out the eleven ‘inconsiderate troupe’ of eleven thieves that gang up to steal some of the precious time away from productive use of managers.

1. Poor Planning: Failure to see the value of planning and getting impatient to get something done are the causes of poor planning. Absence of a plan of action is likely to trigger off a false start, resulting in unproductive time utilization on the critical path of the task they have undertaken. Consequently, the managers might not find enough time for completing the task.

2. Crisis Management: Most often, crisis management is an offspring of lack of prioritization of tasks. As a result of the inability to identify between the urgent, the important and the unnecessary tasks, unimportant tasks are likely to get done first at the cost of important tasks. Consequently, the managers are not likely to find enough time to get around to the important things.

3. Procrastination: It is easy to put off tasks if they are not due right away. The trouble is, tasks pile up and can force managers to run into a time crunch later. Procrastination is generally triggered off by the fear of failure / success, perfectionism, wanting to do it all or incorrect priorities. It is a virtue to want to do a good job. But some people become so anxious about getting a job done perfectly that they never complete it. Managers should examine whether their efforts to get the job done perfectly are really improving things or preventing them from getting the job done.

4. Interruptions: Interruptions and distractions arise due to lack of planning, poor concentration and lack of control over environment. They are unnecessary thieves of a manager’s time and come in many forms – drop-in visitors, telephones, e-mails unscheduled meetings, poor communications and confused chain of authority etc. Managers should be less willing to automatically give away their time just because they demand it. They should learn to avoid distractions if they are to get work done. They should work in areas where they are less likely to be disturbed and tell people when they are busy and cannot be disturbed.

5. Not Delegating: Wanting-to-do-all by oneself is yet another thief that could let the managers get time out of control. They feel that employees can never do anything as well as they can. They fear that something will go wrong if someone else takes over a job. They lack time for long-range planning because they are bogged down in day-to-day operations.

6. Unnecessary Meetings: If a meeting is held without a specific agenda and nothing productive comes out of it, clearly that meeting was unnecessary. Obviously, such meetings are thieves as the time is wasted and things just do not get started.

7. The "shuffling blues": Managers often waste much time because of disorganization. Keeping things that they need in a specific place, eliminating clutter, making sure that they have all the materials or information that they need before starting on the task and following a day-planner or schedule will help keep the 'shuffling blues' away at the work place.

8. Poor Physical Setup: Not having the things that the managers need frequently within easy reach and having a lot of the things that they seldom require close-by results in wastage of a lot of time, wearing out the carpet, retrieving what they frequently need. And of course, as they pass others they will often pull them aside to steal some of their time.

9. Poor Networking: Quality relationships with employees and others can be a substantial time-saver as they open doors for the managers with all kinds of opportunities. Failing to develop a good network base will cause them to waste time creating what they might have had through their network.

10. Bad Attitude: Nothing sinks a day more effectively than having a poor attitude. It causes the managers to dwell on the problems and not the solutions and makes it possible to throw the day away. When they are burdening others with their problems and complaints they are forfeiting their valuable time.

11. Negative People: Being surrounded by negative people could mean the managers are spending a lot of their time listening to them but getting nothing much or purposeful from them. Obviously, avoiding such people will help the managers to minimize wasted hours and get some of their productive time back.

How much time do your spend each day on the following time stealers?

- Watching TV
- Reading Newspapers / Magazines excessively
- Idle chat, gossip and telephonic talk
- Opening and sorting mail
- Returning telephone calls
- Meetings
- Paying bills
- Day-dreaming
- Fretting over personal problems
- Caught in traffic snarls
- Planning how to change things
- Waiting for things to happen
- Taking naps
- Eating snacks between meals
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Shopping
- Wagering money

5 Saboteur Time Styles

The other aspect is self-inflicted thieves – 'saboteur time styles' that steal time. Based on the typical patterns of behaviour that tend to sabotage people's attempts at effective time management, Susan Ward ("Are You Sabotaging Your Time Management Efforts") classifies managers into different personality types. She prescribes the following simple exercise, intended to help managers discover their standard behavioural responses to events and provide them with some clues for effective time management.

The Firemen - For them, every event is a crisis. They are always seen busy dousing the fires. They find scarcely any time for anything else and do not spare a thought on time-management. Tasks keep piling up around them, while they are seen rushing from fire to fire all day.

The Over-Committers – They just cannot say 'No' to anybody. They oblige and try to please everybody. All that anyone has to do is just ask, and they will chair another committee, take on another project, or organize yet another community event. Consequently, none of the tasks receives complete attention and they remain half-done.

The Aquarians - There is such a thing as being too "laid-back" - especially when it starts interfering with their ability to finish tasks or bother to return phone calls. Getting to things that is when they get to them is not time management; it is simple task avoidance.

The Chatty Kathys - Born to socialize, they have astounding oral communication skills and cannot resist exercising them at every opportunity. Every interaction becomes a long drawn out conversation - especially if there is an unpleasant task dawning that they would like to put off.

The Perfectionists – Exactitude is their watchword, and they feel that no rushed job can be a good job. Finishing tasks to satisfaction is such a problem; they need more time zones, not just more time.

Price of Time Inefficiency

What is the price of inefficient time management for an organization? That is a crucial question managers should ask and promptly address. Statistics show that a person - on the average - loses at least one hour of productivity each day due to disorganization and inefficiency. Accordingly calculated, the aggregate monetary value of loss caused by inefficient time management by all the employees in an organization amounts to:

- **1 hour X one person's hourly salary = Rs. _____**
- **6 days a week X _____ Rs. lost today = Rs. lost this week.**
- **48 weeks X Rs lost this week + _____ ____ Rs. lost this year.**
- **Number of persons X __ Rs. lost this year = Rs (total) _____**

The Six D's

"When's the last day you didn't have a high-priority phone call, an urgent email or a stressed-out colleague begging for attention?" asks Tom Gegax, founder of Gegax Management Systems and author of the best –seller **"By the Seat of Your Pants: The No-Nonsense Business Management Guide. "**

He says: "Getting pulled off-course is in every leader's job description. That's why enlightened managers must have a strategy for dealing with daily interruptions." Gegax bases his time-management principles on the "Six D's" - **don't do it, delay it, deflect it, delegate it, do it imperfectly** and **do it**.

"When something pops up, rather than robotically just doing it, I start with the first option," Gegax says. "If that doesn't apply, I move on to the second. I keep cruising down the list until I reach the appropriate action."

For instance, many seemingly urgent tasks disappear if you don't do them or delay them, he says, leaving you more time and energy to focus on the tasks that matter.

And while some contingencies need immediate attention, your involvement isn't always required. Carefully consider whether to deflect the situation to another department or delegate it to a subordinate, Gegax advises.

If you do opt to tackle the problem yourself, Gegax cautions against automatically shifting into “perfectionist mode.”

“A large number of my projects could hardly be described as perfect, yet were successful nevertheless,” he says.

Of course, reserve the final “D” — do it — for the tasks you’ve determined will keep you moving toward your goals.

(Matt Krumrie - Time Management for Managers)

An easy way to find out how effectively or ineffectively managers spend their time is to use the **Time Inventory Chart**. At the end of each day they should write down the time spent on each of their activities. The total amount of time for all activities should equal the total number of hours they were awake.

TIME INVENTORY CHART

Activity	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Sleep								
Hours Awake								
Work: Office & Home								
Commuting & Travel								
Eating								
Dressing & Personal Hygiene								
Family & Personal Work								
Education & Self-Improvement								
Community & Professional Activities								
Leisure								

Hours unaccounted for = _____

6 Monochronic and Polychronic Views of Time

Just as a person's overall personality is made up of and represented by his or her traits, a person's time personality is made up of a series of time styles – monochronic or polychronic. It is expected that a person's awareness of the monochronic/polychronic side of personal time style affects his or her overall approach to time use, perceptions of time pressure and the amounts and order of time spent on tasks. This, in turn, affects his or her personal efficiency.

Monochronic approach to time management is essentially objective and lays emphasis on promptness, speed, brevity and punctuality. It is a very efficient and focused way to manage work and life. Monochronic time managers are those who thrive on detailed planning and organization. They prefer to focus on one task at a time and they follow a schedule from which they don't like to deviate. They tend to get upset by distractions or interruptions and are inclined to put new tasks off until a later date, when they can be worked into the schedule.

Polychronic approach to time management is subjective and lays emphasis on inspiration, imagination, flexibility, intuition and dedication. Trust, bonding, pleasure and quality of life influence more strongly the decisions of a person who 'ticks' in polychronic time. Polychronic time managers prefer to have many projects under way simultaneously, enjoy changing from activity to activity and are unflustered by distractions and interruptions. Unlike their monochronic counterparts, polychronic managers believe they perform well under pressure.

Monochronic Managers	Polychronic Managers
do one thing at a time	do many things at once
concentrate well	are highly distractible and subject to interruptions
take time seriously	consider time commitments an objective to be achieved, if possible
low context, need information	high context, have information
are committed to the job	are committed to the people
adhere religiously to plans	change plans often and easily
are concerned with not disturbing	are more concerned with others closeness than privacy
seldom borrow or lend	borrow and lend easily
emphasize promptness	base promptness on the relationship
are accustomed to short-term relationships	strong tendency to build lifetime relationships

Clearly, monochronic approach is better suited for dealing with routine and predictable tasks, while polychronic approach is better suited in dealing with things such as creating a new concept or resolving an argument. Conflict arises when managers apply a monchronic style to a situation that demands polychronic time, or managers prefer polychronic style while the situation warrants the use of monchronic style.

So how do the managers cope with a healthy need for subjective, polychronic, self-imposed time and at the same time fit in with the monochronic and objective time measures? The only way managers can figure out which method works best in a given situation is based on sound reasoning and acumen.

How can you get an extra hour out of each day?

Here are some tips to help you squeeze those extra minutes out of your day. Of course, you can adapt these so that they will fit in with your situation.

1. Get up earlier
2. Watch less TV (I mean how many Law & Order spinoffs does one need to watch?)
3. Avoid allowing others to waste your time
4. If you don't have to drive to work, use that time to study or plan. If you do drive to work listen to a motivational tape on the way to work instead of that mindless dj talk.
5. Organize your work; do it systematically.
6. Make creative use of lunchtime.
7. Delegate authority if, possible.
8. Spend less time on unimportant phone calls.
9. Think first, and then do the task.
10. Do what you dream about doing, instead of just dreaming about it.
11. Work hardest when you're the most mentally alert
12. Eliminate activities that make the smallest contributions to your life.
13. Always do the toughest jobs first.
14. Before each major act ask, "Is this really necessary?"
15. Choose interesting and constructive literature for spare time reading.
16. Learn how to sleep. Sleep soundly, then work refreshed.

17. Skip desserts.
18. Stop smoking.
19. Write notes or letters while waiting for others.
20. Always carry an envelope with paper in it and a few stamps.
21. Combine tasks that are done in the same area.
22. Be prompt for all appointments.
23. Lay out your clothes the night before.(I need to remember this myself)
24. Call on specialists to do work that you cannot do efficiently
25. Learn to read more rapidly.
26. Take a nap after dinner. Then take a shower. Begin the evening hours relaxed and refreshed.
27. Avoid interruptions.
28. Avoid making a big production out of tiny tasks.
29. Search out job shortcuts.
30. Know your limitations.
31. Work to your full capacity. I know it's tough to break bad habits. However, it is necessary to make sacrifices so that your business can be successful.

Don't try to implement all of these ideas at once. Implement them one at a time and repeat them until they become a part of your daily routine.

Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=DeAnna_Spencer

7 The 'Five Time Zone' Concept

To accelerate the ability to manage their time, managers need to strike a proper balance between monochronic and polychronic aspects of time management. The 'Five Time Zone Concept' advocated by Lewis, Justus and Storz, Moni Laui (Switch on Your Mind: Accelerative Learning Strategies at Work.) enables managers to bring about that balance. The five links in the 'Five Time Zone' approach are - vision, plans, personal organisation systems, commitment and energy.

- **Developing Zone 1 - Vision and Goals:** Managers must search for visions, not tasks. These visions are guided by their personal standards and values, and the direction they want to take. Once their visions are crystallized, they need to do some thinking to create goals from their visions and action steps from their goals.

  My vision and goals . . .

  • What is most important to me?

  • What would I like to do if there were no limitations?

  • What things in my life would I like to be different?

  • My visions for myself are . . .

- **Developing Zone 2 - Plans:** Having established goals, managers now can move into zone two - plans. A plan is needed to turn visions and goals into action. Writing things down and using some form of planning 'tool' are keys to successful planning. Once they have drawn up the plan, they need to review it. They should plan for high-payoff and low-payoff activities for high and low priorities.

- **Developing Zone 3 – Personal Organization Systems (POS):** Zone three encompasses a manager's personal organisation system. Organising the desk, follow-up, paperwork, physical environment are all part of personal organization system. The personal organization system should focus on –
  - Creating an interesting and relaxing work-space
  - Providing easy access to basic tools and materials
  - Grouping similar tasks together to optimize time

- Devising a good follow-up system that works well
- Enabling efficient handling of each piece of paper
- Ensuring a wider reach of people

My action plan to develop my POS
1
2
3
4
5

- **Developing Zone 4 – Commitment:** The fourth time zone is the zone of commitment, in which managers correct any tendencies they might have towards procrastination. Procrastination can be overcome by identifying why one is procrastinating, breaking the mental blocks and visualizing the successful completion of a task while in a relaxed state. One way to do this it to identify the real reason for the procrastination - personal, logical, emotional or ethical barrier to action. Once this has surfaced from the subconscious to the conscious, strategies can be brought into play to deal with it.

Reasons why I procrastinate . . .
1
2
3
4
5

- **Developing Zone 5 – Energy:** The final factor that keeps the chain together is zone five, the energy zone. Managers must check their office surroundings, as the environment they work in can sap or strengthen their energy levels. They must also identify the prime time - the time of day when they are most energetic and alert – they can schedule high-priority, high-payoff tasks or activities for these times.
- Find your prime time
- Internal and external prime time
- Cognitive tasks for the morning
- Complete high-energy tasks in high-energy periods
- Take energy breaks

8 Time Management Matrix

Time management experts like Stephen Covey S R (The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People; Simon & Schuster) have developed a model called a time management matrix. This model enables managers to prioritize their activities and use their time more effectively. With the help of the model, they can evaluate their activities in terms of importance and urgency.

Time Management matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I Crises, Projects, accidents, etc.	Quadrant II Planning, exercise, relationships, etc.
Not Important	Quadrant III Phone calls, visitors, small talk, etc.	Quadrant IV Daydreaming, TV, procrastination, etc.

Tasks can be categorized as urgent/ not urgent or as important/ not important as shown below. Each of a manager's activities can be distinguished as one of four types, represented by the four quadrants of the time management matrix. Categorizing a manager's activities in these quadrants helps him identify what is important and avoid unimportant tasks and activities. It also helps him prioritize important tasks and activities.

Q1 : Sruggling to stay ahead

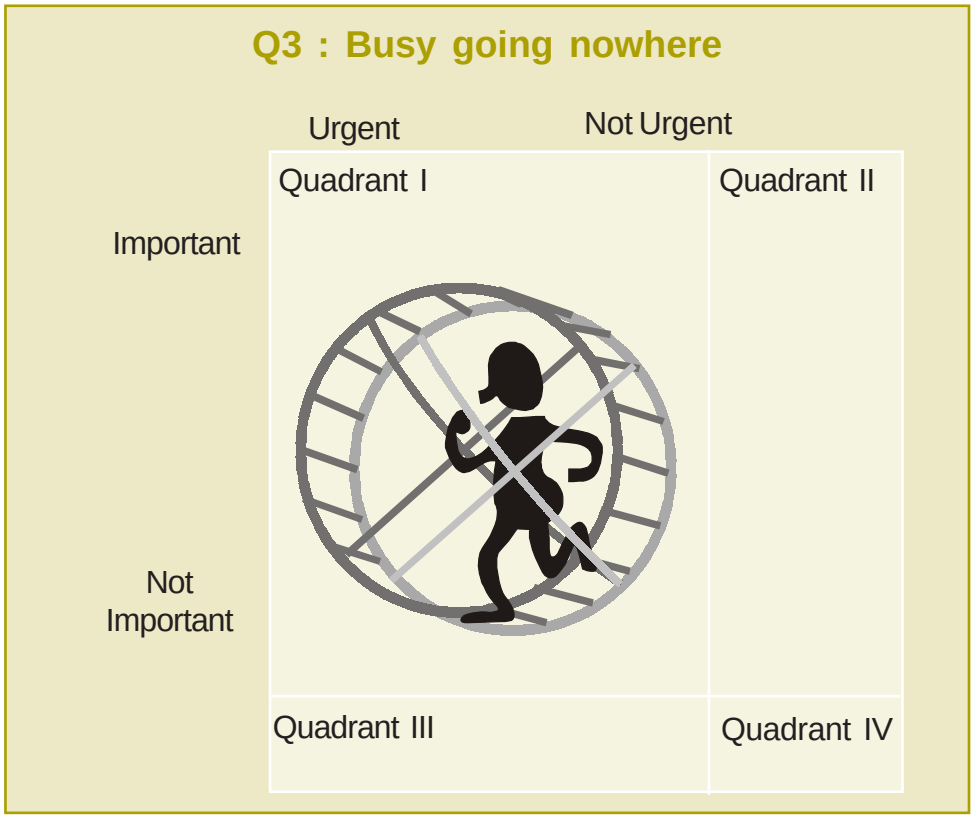
	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Quadrant II
Not Important	Quadrant III	Quadrant IV

The activities in Quadrant 1 are both important and urgent. These include deadline-driven tasks and important daily chores. The results of operating in this Quadrant are stress, burnout and crisis management

Q2 : Calm and in control

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Quadrant II
Not Important	Quadrant III	Quadrant IV

The activities in Quadrant 2 are important but not urgent. These activities are characterized as preparation, planning, crisis prevention, and deadline-avoiding tasks. Operating in this Quadrant will mean a manager having a proper perspective, vision, balance, discipline, control and few crises.



The activities in Quadrant 3 are not important but urgently press upon us and interrupt our more important activities. These include responding to drop-in visitors, phone calls, meetings, and mail that do not increase productivity and effectiveness. Operating in this Quadrant will mean short-term focus, crisis management, worthlessness of goals and plans, feeling of victimization and broken relationships.

Q4 : Aspiring to mediocrity

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I	Quadrant II
Not Important	Quadrant III	Quadrant IV

The activities in Quadrant 4 are neither important nor urgent. Busywork, time wasters, junk mail, and some phone calls are the type of activities that are a part of this quadrant. Operating in this Quadrant will mean total irresponsibility and over-dependence on others in addition to outcomes in Quadrant 3.

From a study of the Time Management Matrix, the following observations can be made:

1. Activities in Quadrant I and Quadrant II may be equally important. Some activities in Quadrant II may even be more important than activities in Quadrant I, but not necessarily more urgent.
2. Activities in Quadrant I assume critical importance and top priority.
3. Spending most of the time on Activities in Quadrant I results in stress and burnout.
4. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II can reduce the activities in Quadrant I, in the long run.
5. Focusing on activities in Quadrant II will mean avoiding all unimportant activities in Quadrant III and IV.

9 Elements of Effective Time Management

Time goes by at the same rate no matter what one does. One can not speed it up or slow it down. Unlike the other resources that one manages, there is no way to control time. The best one can do is take charge of oneself in the framework of time, investing oneself in those things that matter most in one's life.

Effective time management requires reducing the impact of the time stealers and increasing the effectiveness of a manager in getting the things done that need to be done. The following are the important elements that combine to enable a manager eliminate distractions, interruptions and inefficiencies in the work process to make the most of time management.

A. Evaluating How Time is Used

The first step of effective time management is identifying how a manager is using his time. This can be done by –

I. Activity Time Log: The first step to managing time better is to find out how managers are currently spending their time. Keeping a Time Log is a very effective way to do this. Through an Activity Time Log, managers can make a list of the activities or tasks that they spend time on. The very act of measuring is often enough to raise their unconscious habits into their consciousness, where they then have a chance to scrutinize and change them.

Daily Activity Time Log

Start Time	End Time	Activity Description

Time Log requires that managers track all the tasks – including the routine tasks such as commuting, reading a newspaper, eating and attending telephone etc. - in a systematic way and note the successive sequence from the start through the end of the day.

1. Using the daily log on the worksheet, record your activities for a 24-hour period.
2. Include the start and end times for each activity.
3. If more space is needed, continue keeping the log on the back or on another sheet of paper.

Activity Category	Total Time
Misc.	
Total Time (should equal 24 hours)	

Pick activity categories that will encompass the entire day. Label those below and add up the total time spent on that particular activity category. Include a miscellaneous category for things that do not fit well into typical categories. Keeping the Activity Log for several days helps managers analyze their time and answer questions like:

- What is the most productive period of time?
- What is the least productive time?
- Did they achieve their goals?
- How could they have done what they were doing more effectively?

Activity logs are valuable tools for scrutinizing the way managers use their time. They can also help managers to track changes in their energy, alertness and effectiveness throughout the day. By examining their activity log, they will be able to discover and obviate time-wasting or low-yield jobs. They will also know the times of day at which they are the most effective, so that they can carry out their most important tasks during those times.

Studies reveal that managers do a miniscule of real work per day – 1.5 hours of actual work per day. The rest of the time is spent socializing, taking coffee breaks, eating, engaging in non-productive communication, shuffling papers and other preventable time-wasters.

Analyzing The Daily Time Log

After completing your **Daily Time Log,** take a few moments to analyze your results. This analysis will give you a clear picture on how you spend your time and how you can improve.

1. Did you have a plan for each day with clear priorities in writing?

2. Were you doing the right job at the right time?

• What did you do that should not have been done at all?

• Could it have been done more effectively at another time?

• Could it have been delegated? If so, to whom can it be delegated?

3. What could be done in a better way?

• Faster

• More simply

• In less detail

• With better results

4. Concerning interruptions:

• How are you interrupted (phone, visitors, meetings, crises, self, boss, clients)?

• How often are you interrupted?

• For how long have you been interrupted?

• How important were the interruptions?

• How long does it take to recover—to get back on track?

• How many interrupted tasks were left unfinished at the end of the day?

5. Concerning contacts/ communications with others:

• How important is time spent in accordance with your real priorities?

• Who (with the right person) are they?

• How often do you spend with them?

• How long?

6. To what extent did you reach your goals?

Source: Mackenzie, R. Alec. *The Time Trap,* 2nd rev. ed., NY: ANACOM, American Management Association, 1990.

Based on the analysis of Activity Time Log over some time, it is possible for managers to calculate their daily efficiency ratio. Daily efficiency ratio is the amount of time spent by managers on the work divided by the total amount of time they spent in the office.

Efficiency Ratio = (Time Doing "Real Work") / (Time Spent "At Work")

Assuming that managers have done only 15 hours of actual productive time in a week (60 hrs), the Daily Efficiency Ratio of a manager is only 25% of the time.

B. Goal-Setting

Why is goal-setting so important in time management? From the time management perspective, a person's life is a sequence of big and small choices and decisions. It is those choices that a person really manages, not the flow of time. A key difference between successful and unsuccessful managers is the quality and practicality of the goals they set for themselves. Goals state clearly the measurable and specific results to be accomplished by the managers and the timeframe to attain them.

Goal-setting is the wisdom that comes from practical experience that helps managers direct their conscious and subconscious decisions towards success. The process of setting goals helps managers choose where they want to go in personal and professional life. By being aware of precisely what they want to achieve, they know the efforts required for it.

Goals help in monitoring the day to day activities and ensure the activities are progressing in the right direction. There are two types of goals managers can set for themselves – rational goals and directional goals. Rational goals are specific, short-time goals focusing on the questions-

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why am I doing this task?
- Who are all involved in the task?
- What are the expected outcomes of this task?
- When can this task be expected to be completed?

Directional goals (also known as domain planning) are long-term goals with no predictable outcomes, focusing on the question - What do I want to accomplish? To stay focused, managers should aim and visualize these goals. They should identify possible quarters from where they can pool up the support and required resources needed to put together and accomplish those goals.

Time Management Goal Planner

Lifetime Goals (long range)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

One-year goals (medium range)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

One-month goals (short range)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Pick two top priority goals from each category. Enter them here. These are the goals, you will begin to work on, now.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The above six top priority goals should occupy a manager's time for one month. Next month, they should make a new list. Some goals will remain top priority while others will drop off. The goals will always be accompanied by a list of specific, easy to accomplish

steps. They should set aside a certain time each day to work on top priority goals. Emphasis should be on results rather than activity.

What makes a good goal? A good goal is one that when followed, offers a reasonably high probability of success in the defined time-frame. Gene Donohue ("Goal Setting Powerful Written Goals in 7 Easy Steps!") lays down the following 7 goal setting steps for the managers to follow that help in building the road maps to good goals.

- **1. Make sure the goal you are working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good**: When setting goals it is very important for the managers to remember that the goals are compatible with their personal interests and values. Any inherent conflict or incompatibility will cause unwarranted friction and adversely impact accomplishment of the goals.
- **2. A goal cannot contradict any of your other goals:** Non-integrated thinking can also sabotage all the hard work managers put into their goals. Non-integrated thinking can also hamper their everyday thoughts. Managers should continually strive to eliminate contradictory ideas from their thinking.
- **3. Develop goals in the 6 areas of life:** Setting goals in each area of life will ensure a more balanced life as managers begin to examine and change the fundamentals of everyday living. Setting goals in each area of life also helps in eliminating the non-integrated thinking. The six areas of life that need goal-setting include –
    - **Family and Home**
    - **Physical and Health**
    - **Mental and Educational**
    - **Financial and Career**
    - **Spiritual and Ethical**
    - **Social and Cultural**

- **4. Write down your goals:** The difference between a goal and a dream is the written word. Writing down the goals creates the roadmap to success. Although the mere act of writing them down can set the process in motion, it is also extremely important to review the goals frequently. The more focused the managers are on their goals the more likely they are to accomplish them.
- **5. Write your goal in the positive instead of the negative:** The subconscious mind can not determine right from wrong and it does not judge. It's only function is to carry out its instructions. The more positive instructions one gives it, the more positive results one will get.
- **6. Write your goal out in complete detail.** Writing down goals in details is once again giving the subconscious mind a detailed set of instructions to work on. The more information one gives it, the more clear the final outcome becomes. The more precise the outcome, the more efficient the subconscious mind can become.
- **7. By all means, make sure your goal is high enough:** Keeping in view the time and resources at their disposal, managers should set fairly high but practicable goals. Lower goals are indicators of lower motivational levels on the part of managers. Higher goals are pointers to the zest managers have toward their work.

Apart from the above, traditional goal-setting wisdom teaches that a good goal must be believable, specific and measurable, and have a deadline.

Managers must believe that it is possible for them to achieve the goal or they will not be motivated to try. The goals should also be measurable and specific enough for them to know unambiguously whether they have been completed yet or not. For goals to be meaningful, managers must know the time-frame by when they are to be accomplished.

Reviewing your goals daily is a crucial part of a manager's success and must become part of his/her routine. At the beginning of each day, they must take stock of the list of goals and identify the efforts required on their part for the day to accomplish each of the goals by the set deadline. Each night, they should review the goals to ascertain whether the required

work has been done or not. This process will set their subconscious and conscious minds working towards the goal. This will also begin to replace any of the negative self-talk they may indulge in and replace it with positive self-talk.

A manager's time can best be directed by using goals. Without goals, they become easily side-tracked and waste time.

C. Defining Priorities

Prioritizing means "taking conscious control of one's choices and deciding to spend more time on the activities and tasks that are important and valuable, and less time on the ones that are not...." The importance of prioritizing tasks or activities is best driven home by the popular 'pebbles and jar' parable.

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of managers. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz" and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouth mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone yelled, "Yes."

The time management expert replied, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. He then asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?"

"Probably not," one of them answered.

"Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the audience shouted.

Once again he said, “Good.” Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the spectators and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!”

“No,” the speaker replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is, “If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.

What are the ‘big rocks’ in your life, time with loved ones, your faith, your education, your dreams, a worthy cause, teaching or mentoring others?

Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you’ll never get them in at all. So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question, “What are the ‘big rocks’ in my life?” Then, put those in your jar first.

How to Eat an Elephant? Time management expert Alec Mackenzie in The Time Trap narrates an anecdote that underscores the importance of prioritizing activities.

As the story goes, an efficiency consultant by the name of Ivy Lee was meeting with the president of a large steel mill. The president, one Charles Schwab, was interested to find out how he could increase performance. Lee was telling Schwab how he could provide him with advice to better manage the company. Schwab, however, was not interested because he did not want more knowledge. Instead, he wanted to find out how to get more done within available time, and he was willing to pay anything within reason for such advice. Lee said that he could help him increase his efficiency by at least 50% provided he could have about 20 minutes of his time.

After Schwab consented, Lee gave him a blank piece of paper and told him to write down the six most important things he wanted to accomplish tomorrow. Schwab thought about it and completed the task in about three minutes. Then Lee instructed him to order these things from most important to least important. That, too, took very little time. Now the

executive was instructed to keep the list until the following morning, at which time he was asked to look at the first item and to start working on it until it was completed. After that he was told to work on task number two and so on until the end of the day. Lee further advised Schwab not to worry about those tasks that he could not get done, since it didn't matter because they would not have gotten done anyway.

Then Schwab was asked to repeat this process every working day. Lee then told him to try this system as long as he likes. Lee also asked Schwab to have his employees try this system and, if it worked, to send him a check for whatever the idea was worth to him and the company. After several months, Lee received a check for $25,000 and a letter in which Schwab said that this was one of the most profitable ideas that he had ever been taught. It is further reputed that the consistent application of this strategy helped to turn this small steel mill into Bethlehem Steel.

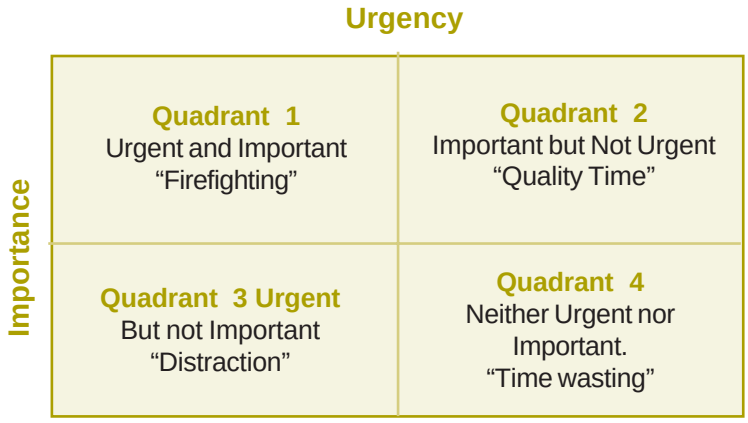
Managers must realize that they cannot simply do task or activity they take up. Given the constraints of time and resources, they have to be selective and consciously choose to spend time on what is most important to them. They have to keep in mind is that whenever they start an activity or task, they are inevitably ruling out everything else they could have done with that time.

When managers have to choose among several tasks, they can use several prioritization tools. The key ones are summarized below. It can be very helpful at times to break out of their routine way of looking at things and to use a tool that they do not use all of the time.

Covey's Quadrants

Discussed earlier under Time Matrix, Steven Covey describes a high-level prioritization Time Management Grid in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. In this grid, tasks are categorized by four quadrants:

Time Management Grid



- Quadrant 1 represents things which are both urgent and important - labelled "firefighting". The activities need to be dealt with immediately, and they are important.
- Quadrant 2 represents things which are important, but not urgent - labelled "Quality Time". Although the activities here are important, and contribute to achieving the goals and priorities - they do not have to be done right now. As a result, they can be scheduled when they can be given quality thought to them. A good example would be the preparation of an important talk, or mentoring a key individual. Prayer time, family time and personal relaxation/recreation are also part of Quadrant 2.
- Quadrant 3 represents distractions. They must be dealt with right now, but frankly, are not important. For example, when a person answers an unwanted phone call, - he/she has had to interrupt whatever he/she is doing to answer it.
- The final quadrant, Quadrant 4, represents things which are neither urgent nor important. Some meetings could fall into this category – they have been scheduled in advance, but if they achieve nothing, then they have simply wasted time. Other examples could include driving time and low quality relaxation or family time.

Using the Tool:

Managers must strive to maximize Quadrant 2 time. They should allocate time in the diary to carry out these tasks when they are at their best. Doing so can reduce the amount of time taken up by firefighting quadrant 1 activities, since many quadrant 1 activities could

have been quadrant 2 if they had been done earlier. Managers can also seek to reduce time spent in Quadrant 3 by improving the systems and processes for dealing with distractions, and they can eliminate as much as possible of quadrant 4 activities, by either not spending time on these things, or changing the nature of them to make them more productive. For example, driving can be quadrant 4 if the time is unproductive, but there are a number of ways of making this time more productive by learning new skills, planning and so on.

Ken Blanchard's Quadrants

Ken Blanchard - the author of the popular book "The One Minute Manager" and "The On-Time, On-Target Manager" – sets out his quadrants a little differently:

- Have to Do, Want to Do
- Have to Do, Don't Want to Do
- Don't Have to Do, Want to Do
- Don't Have to Do, Don't Want to Do

Most of the managers do not have a problem with Quadrants 1 and 4. If It is Quadrant 1, they will willingly do it. If it is Quadrant 4, they never do it. It is Quadrants 2 and 3 where the conflict is likely to arise and most of the managers are likely to be attracted to Quadrant 3, meaning things that do not have to be done get done.

The Blanchard advice for the managers is to take up tasks in the order of Quadrant 2 and Quadrant 1, and spend little or no time on Quadrant 3 items. To use this model, managers have to chart out to-do list and plan accordingly.

Paired Comparison

The Simple Paired Comparison method uses a simple scoring system for comparing activities. The following example illustrates how this method can be applied:

Here is the list of example tasks or activities to be performed:

1. Call home about dinner plans

2. Fire Venkat

3. Draft budget report

4. Respond to e-mails

Compare the following and put a check mark against the relatively important task of each comparison:

- 1 to 2, 1 to 3, 1 to 4
- 2 to 3, 2 to 4
- 3 to 4

Let's say the result is as follows:

1. Call home about dinner plans	XX
2. Fire Venkat	XXX
3. Draft budget report	X
4. Respond to e-mails	

So, the order you would do the tasks in would be 2, 1, 3, 4.

The ABC Method

The ABC method ranks tasks into the following categories:

- 'A' are activities which Absolutely must get done now
- 'B' are those that Better get done soon
- 'C' are those that could wait for now
- 'D' are those that can be Delegated but require follow up

Then it subdivides tasks in these categories into A1, A2, A3, ..., B1, B2, ... and so forth.

A lot of people find this prioritization method helpful.

The Payoff versus Time Method

With this method, the managers have to weigh each task by the payoff they expect from it versus the time it takes to do it. Tasks that have high payoff and that take little time are the ones they would take up first. Correspondingly, tasks that have low payoff and that take a lot of time are ones they would do last or not do them at all.

Whichever method one uses - whether a particular method listed above, a combination of methods, or one of one's own design – a manager should use it not only to rank the order in which they will do things, but also to defer or eliminate items that are not important or of least priority.

D. Scheduling Activities

After identifying the activities and prioritizing them, it is time to create a schedule. When scheduling, it is important to plan a weekly schedule as well as a daily schedule. The weekly schedule is important for the overall success of the activities and tasks, but it is the daily planning that will help one to track one's progress and determine whether or not one is on schedule.

Managers should try using significant project milestones in their weekly planning but for daily planning break each milestone down into the necessary components and plan the completion of those components on a daily basis. It is helpful to keep one's schedule in an appointment book or electronic organizer, but for purposes of planning one can use a scheduling grid as follows.

Time Management Tools

- Master List
- Calendar
- Prioritized Task List
- Paper
- Directory

The following points demonstrate why scheduling is so critical to success.

- Scheduling can greatly reduce your stress quotient. Proper scheduling gives one the peace of mind of knowing that one has formulated a feasible plan of action and that one's goals are attainable.
- Scheduling also helps one to be prepared for obstacles because part of the scheduling process is creating a contingency plan for unexpected problems.
- Scheduling serves as a way to evaluate your progress as you work. Planning your daily and weekly activities will clearly illustrate whether or not you are staying on schedule.

Tool 1 : Master List

- **Begin with items from your desktop**
- **Quick reference of ongoing activities**
- **Include due dates**
- **Include personal and professional goals**

Tool 1 : Master List

- **Keep track of delegated work**
- **Establish and set goals**
- **Orgnize larger projects**
  - **Break down into smaller task**
  - **Daily task lists**
  - **Expect the unexpected**

When scheduling the activities, ideally managers should follow the below procedure:

- Block out times on the schedule for each of the major activities.
- Start with recurring activities that occur at a fixed time
- Then block out time for activities that they want to do on a regular basis
- Allot ample time for each activity, especially high priority activities.
- Take into account when they are most effective. Morning people might schedule more activities early in the day. Night owls might schedule things later.

Sample Daily Planner

Name: **Day of Week:** **Date:**

T=Top Priority M=Middle Priority L=Low Priority

Time	Actually Accomplished	Planned Task To Do Today
7:30		
8:00		
8:30		
9:00		
9:30		
10:00		
10:30		
11:00		
11:30		
Noon		
12:30		
1:00		
1:30		
2:00		
2:30		
3:00		
3:30		
4:00		
4:30		
5:00		
5:30		

Work your way down from the top items. Only when they are completed should you work on the middle priority tasks. Only when everything else is done should you work on the low priority items. You will find that it is often acceptable to ignore the low priority items. While scheduling activities, managers need to consider the following points:

10 Essential Steps in Using A Planner

Outlined below is a step-by-step approach for using a day planner to manage time effectively.

1. **Select a Compatible Time Planner:** A day planner is a device that includes a calendar, space to write “to-do” lists, and space to write telephone numbers, addresses, and other/ reference information. It can be a Franklin Planner (simple paper-and-pencil type), Day Timer, a fancy electronic organizer or time management software on a computer. If techno-savvy, a manager can pick an electronic organizer. If not, a manager can choose the paper-and-pencil method.

2. **Find a Single, Accessible Place to Keep the Planner:** Having selected a planner, managers should cultivate the habit of keeping it in an exclusively designated and easily accessible place at home and workplace. An ideal place to keep the planner could be near the telephone or on the office desk.

Enter the Basic in the Day Planner: Managers should consider what vital information might be useful to enter in the Planner – such as insurance policy numbers, computer passwords, telephone numbers, equipment numbers - and arrange the information in alphabetical order.

Tool 2 : Your Calender

- **Maintain your own calendar**
- **Keep one calendar for everything**
- **Take calendar wherever you go**
- **Know your energy cycle**
- **Plan every day**

1. **Carry the Planner at All Times:** Carrying the planner at all times means that the managers have all the vital information they need with them all the time. Ideally, the Day Planner should be their integral part and constant companion of managers.

Tool 2 : Your Calender

- Don't plan every minute
- Prioritize
- Save peak energy periods for yurself
- Schedule time for routine taks
- Schedule your rewards

5. **Refer to the Day Planner Regularly:** Managers should make it a habit to refer to the Day Planner thrice a day – at the start of the day to be sure of the things to be done, afternoon to monitor the progress of their activities, and night to take stock of the status of the activities for the day.

6. **Use the Day Planner as a Calendar for Everything:** Appointments, and activities for the day on personal, family and professional fronts should be listed in the planner. It is advisable that activities relating to family and professions are highlighted using different colours. It is also essential that crucial activities or tasks that need personal attention and close scrutiny are highlighted using different colours to review their progress from time to time.

7. **Use Day Planner as a 'Brain Dump' to Capture Ideas:** Day Planner also doubles up as a Brain-Dump for managers as they can put down the ideas as they surface in the planner. That way it helps to refer to them and weigh their value and feasibility at the appropriate time.

Tool 3 : Daily Task List

- **List everything you'd like to accomplish**
- **Assign value using "ABC" system**
- **Assign numerical value to each item**

Conduct a Daily Planning Session: The goal of this session is to plan the upcoming day's activities and develop a plan of attack and to carry out the same. In addition to listing priorities and reviewing schedules, the planning session is the time to consider exactly how each task will be accomplished. What materials will be needed? What obstacles are likely to be encountered? How can these obstacles be overcome? The planning session will thus provide a mental map that guides them in carrying out the tasks on the list

Tool 4 : Notes

- **Carry paper at all times**
- **Make notes**
- **Use full-sized paper**
- **Date notes**
- **File in action file folders**

9. **Prioritize 'To-Do' List and Action in Accordance with Priorities:** There are many ways to prioritize a "to do" list. One way is to number all of the items on the list in order of decreasing priority. Another way is to classify items into one of three categories: "Essential," "Important," and "Do only if I have extra time." The managers should pick the method that best fits their style, and begin prioritizing their daily "to do" list.

10. **Generate a List of Long-Term Goals and Break the Long-Term Goals into Small, Manageable Chunks:** First, generate a list of all long-term goals. These are broad goals to be accomplished over many months and years. Then, take one goal at a time and break it down into small chunks or sub-goals that might be accomplished on a monthly basis. Assign one sub-goal to each month of the year.

    At the beginning of the month, conduct a monthly planning session to decide how to accomplish the sub-goal over the course of the month. Assign various tasks to each week of the month. At the beginning of each week, conduct a weekly planning session to decide how to assign aspects of that week's sub-goal to the daily task lists for the entire week. During each daily planning session, plan the details of the assigned task that will be performed that day.

Tool 4 : Telephone/ Address Directory

- Carry It
- Maintain one directory
- Transfer business card infomration
- Include e-mail, fax, home address/phone

E: Personal Action Plan with a Follow-Up

In order to eliminate the time wasters in the work-process, managers need to act to change them. For them to act and take corrective measures, they need to draw up an action plan.

Below is a personal action plan, including an example, to help you identify and solve your daily time wasters.

Time Waster	Cause	Solution	Date to Start	Date to Check Progress	Follow-up Action taken
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Source: Mackenzie, R. Alec. *The Time Trap,* 2nd rev. ed., NY: ANACOM, American Management Association, 1990.

10 Getting oriented to manage time

To get ready to manage their time better, managers should answer the following questions:

- What is my time worth? How much do I get paid per hour? If I could save one hour a day, what would this amount to, in the course of one year?
- What is my job? What results are expected of me? Am I meeting a predetermined, definable purpose, or am I just drifting?
- What have I been doing? At the end of a day, am I able to account for my time, or do I say to myself, “Where did the day go? I don’t feel I have accomplished anything.’’
- Have I been doing the right things? Am I involved in work activities that rightfully fall under the responsibility of my subordinates? What are the five most important tasks I have to do?
- How am I spending/ investing my time? What results do I see for the time I spend on each activity? What would happen if some of these things were not done?
- Am I goal-oriented? Am I working toward quantified objectives? Have I established performance standards for myself? For my people?
- Have I done any planning? When I arrive on the job in the morning, do I know what it is I want to accomplish during that particular day? Have I established priorities? Have I determined a hierarchy of importance?
- Have I tried to manage, schedule, control my work and time? Is the job running me or am I running the job? Am I suffering from “brief caseitis,’’ i.e., bringing home more and more of my work ?
- Do I delegate all possible tasks? Am I able to hand over more tasks to my co-workers or staff at work and to my spouse or children at home?

Does the time I spend on the job affect my lifestyle? Am I enjoying life and having fun, or am I so stressed from the pressures of poor time management on the job that the tension carries over into my everyday life?

How We Waste Time

- Lack of discipline
- Indecisiveness
- Personal Disorganization
- Procrastination
- Inability to say “NO”
- Poor Delegation Skills
- Day Dreaming
- Worry

Time Waste - Caused by Others

- Telephone Interruptions
- Drop-In Visitors
- Unscheduled Meetings
- Poor Communications
- Confused chain of Authority

11 Overcoming Barriers to Effective Time Management

Telephone Interruptions: Delegation of authority and responsibility is an ideal way of controlling telephone interruptions. Also fixing specific time slots for socializing and business will help the managers effectively reduce the telephone interruptions. Implementation of the screening procedures also lessen the burden of unwanted telephone intrusions.

Time - Saving Tips : Interruptions

- **Close your door**
- **Distinguish between necessary visits and interruptions**
- **Use different techniques**
  - **Visit others**
  - **Arrange appointment**
  - **Leave your office**
  - **Establish regular meeting time**

a. **Drop-in Visitors:** Taking time-log of visits and implementing a plan to arrange and screen appointments is an effective way of dealing with drop-in visitors. Managers can also have 'Open Door' and 'Quiet Hour" timings fixed so that they are not distracted when certain of their tasks demand undivided personal attention.

Meetings: Setting a clear agenda before will provide the right direction to the meetings and elicit positive outcomes from them. Selecting an appropriate location and assessing the needs of participation, information and coordination are also important prerequisites in conducting meetings. Concise minutes summarizing decisions, assignments and deadlines followed by effective follow-up on decisions make meetings purposeful.

Time - Saving Tips : Meetings

- Request agenda
- Arrive early
- Notify chair if your will be late
- Avoid routine, emergency, impromptu meetings
- Avoid Monday mornings, Friday afternoons

a. **Lack of Priorities:** Putting first things first helps managers spend relatively more time on activities that are important. Managers must realize that most of the problems arise due to action without thought. Defining clearly the objectives and priorities and deadlines in the form of a Daily Planner will help managers effectively use their time.

Personal Disorganization: Managers must recognize that personal disorganization, indecision, procrastination, insecurity, confusion of priority, and inability to meet deadlines are mostly due to lost documents. Uncluttered desk, orderly filing system and simplified procedures will help the managers make the most of time management. Through a system in place for screening junk mails, minimizing paperwork and emphasis on brevity, managers can overcome their personal disorganization.

Time - Saving Tips : Managing E-mails

- Know your system's special features
- List serves
- Same time every day
- Use Web services - (examples)

  - IFAP.ed.gov
  - NASFAA Today New

a. **Ineffective Delegation:** Managers must ensure that clear, unambiguous instructions are given to the subordinates. They should establish plans, schedules with details, progress reports, monitoring of deadlines, and emphasize goal-accomplishment methods and procedures. They should measure results rather than activity and track progress of an activity to take timely corrective actions.

b. **Attempting too much:** Managers must set their objectives, priorities, and deadlines daily so that they must plan, start early and always remember Murphy's 2nd Law: "Recognize that everything takes longer than you think". They must limit their response to the urgent and important demands. They should learn to say "No" when necessary.

c. **Unclear Communication:** Managers must assess the legitimate needs for information and check for interference, noise or activity in the flow of information. They should also assess potential impact of unclear communication, take preventive steps and minimize organizational levels. If it is difficult to minimize organizational levels, they should facilitate easy flow of information across the organization.

d. **Inadequate, Inaccurate or Delayed Information:** Managers must determine what information is needed for planning, decisions and feedback on results. Then they should ensure its availability, reliability and timeliness.

e. **Indecision/ Procrastination:** Managers must set deadlines on all objectives and priorities, use reminders, have the secretary check on the progress, reward themselves (no coffee until they finish). They should avoid fixing blame; ask what's been learned and how repetition can be avoided.

f. **Confused Authority / Responsibility:** Managers must lay emphasis on accountability for results; through recognition and reward for exercise of initiative; through citation, consideration in performance and salary review, promotion, etc.

Inability to say 'No': Managers must recognize that inability to say 'No' is a major cause of time wastage. They should understand that saying "Yes" may betray feelings of insecurity and low self-worth and should resist this urge. They should take time log recording all "Yes" responses that could have been "No" and assess the time wasted. They should learn to say "No", especially to inappropriate or thoughtless requests. Dr Mackenzie suggests four steps to say NO and it is presented in the BOX on the next page for quick reference.

Dr. Mackenzie's Four Steps to Saying "No."

1. Listen

This lets the requesting person know you're giving full attention to the request and lets *you* fully understand what is being asked.

2. Say "No" politely but firmly right away

Don't build false hopes with wishy-washy answers.

3. Give your reasons, if appropriate

Your reasons may include your priorities, your schedule, etc. This reinforces your credibility.

4. Offer alternatives, if possible

Demonstrate your good faith by suggesting other ways to meet the person's need.

There are many ways to say "No" after listening to a request that you simply cannot handle.

Dr. Mackenzie offers a few:

• "I'm sorry, my other commitments just won't permit me to take on another project right now."

• "You know, on New Year's Day I promised my family I wouldn't take on anything else this year. I've been neglecting them too much."

• "Thanks for the compliment, but I'm afraid I'll have to decline. maybe next year."

• If a request catches you off-guard, don't say anything until you count to ten first.

a. **Leaving tasks unfinished:** Managers must take time log and assess the impact of leaving tasks unfinished. They should set deadlines on all important tasks to provide incentive to complete them. They should get organized to permit effective control of tasks. They should recognize that sound organization saves time in retrieving information, processing decisions, and maintaining control over projects.
b. **Lack of Self-Discipline:** When a manager switches priorities of his team, he makes self-discipline difficult to practice. S/he should take time log to record frequency, assess cost, discuss with colleagues to seek ways of reducing problem.

Conclusion

Now that we have come towards the end of the book we have realized that how our time gets wasted because we never thought of managing time in an effective manner. It is said that time and tide waits for none so our attempts would be to make the best use of time and prevent others from wasting our time too. This chapter winds up all our observations on time management in this book. It summarizes as to what causes us to waste our time and suggests solutions to save time as much as possible. It also offers tips to make the best use of time. As with all the precious resources, time is a scarce resource. The wisdom lies in making the most of it. Horace Mann says:

> “Lost, yesterday,
>
> Somewhere between sunrise and sunset,
>
> Two golden hours,
>
> Each set with sixty diamond minutes.
>
> No reward is offered,
>
> For they are gone forever”

Time-Wasters: Causes & Solutions

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
Lack of planning	Failure to see the benefit of planning	Recognize that planning may take time but it saves time and effort in the long run.
Lack of planning	Action-oriented (perhaps *not* action-oriented otherwise the above point is similar to this)	Emphasize results, not activity.
Lack of planning	Success without	Recognize that success is often in spite of, not because of, methods.
Lack of priorities	Lack of goals and objectives	Write down goals and objectives. Discuss priorities with co-workers and family members.
Over-commitment	Broad interests (Impractical) Confusion in priorities	Learn to say no. Re-assesses your goals and priorities
Over-commitment	Failure to set priorities/Over Ambitious	Develop a personal philosophy regarding time. Relate priorities to a schedule of events
Management by crisis	Lack of planning	Apply the same solutions as for lack of planning.
Management by crisis	Unrealistic time estimates	Allow more time. Allow for interruptions.
Management by crisis	Problem oriented	Be opportunity oriented
Management by crisis	Reluctance of others to break bad news	Encourage fast transmission of information via grapevines as essential for timely corrective action
Telephone	Lack of self-discipline	Screen and group calls. Be brief.
Telephone	Desire to be informed and involved	Stay uninvolved with all but essentials. Manage by exception.
Meetings	Fear of responsibility for decisions.	Make decisions without meetings.
Meetings	Indecision	Make decisions even when some facts are missing.

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
Meetings	Over-communication	Discourage unnecessary meetings. Convene only those needed.
Meetings	Poor leadership	Use agendas. Stick to the subject. Prepare concise minutes as soon as possible.
Meetings	Indecision	Lack of confidence in the facts. Improve fact finding and validating procedures.
Meetings	Insistence on all the facts; ***paralysis by analysis***	Accept risks as inevitable. Decide without all facts.
Meetings	Fear of consequences of a mistake	Delegate the right to be wrong. Use mistakes as a learning process.
Meetings	Lack of a rational decision-making process.	Get facts, set goals, investigate alternatives and negative consequences, make the decision, then implement it.
Lack of delegation	Fear of subordinates' inadequacy.	Train. Allow mistakes. Replace if necessary.
Lack of delegation	Fear of subordinates' competence	Delegate fully. Give credit. Challenge the potential and reward merit.
Lack of delegation	Work overload on subordinates	Balance the workload. Reorder priorities.
Haste	Impatience with detail	Take time to get it right. Save the time of doing it over.
Haste	Responding to the urgent	Distinguish between the urgent and the important.
Haste	Lack of planning ahead	Take time to plan. It repays itself many times over.
Haste	Attempting too much in too little time.	Attempt less, delegate much more.
Paperwork & reading	Knowledge explosion	Read selectively. Learn speed reading.
Paperwork & reading	"Computeritis"	Manage computer data by exception.
Paperwork & reading	Failure to screen	Delegate reading to subordinates. Ask for summaries.

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
Routine & trivia	Lack of priorities	Set and concentrate on priority goals. Delegate non-essentials.
Routine & trivia	Over-surveillance of subordinates	Delegate; then give subordinates their right to do it their way. Look to results, not details or methods.
Routine & trivia	Refusal to delegate; feeling of greater security dealing with operating detail	Recognize that without delegation, it is impossible to grow. Forget perfectionism.
Visitors	Enjoyment in socializing	Do it elsewhere. Meet visitors outside work setting. Suggest lunch, if necessary or hold stand up conferences.
Visitors	Inability to say “no.”	Screen. Say no. Be unavailable. Modify the open door policy.

Now that you know about these time-wasters, answer the following questions?

1. What time-wasters prevent you from getting your work done on a typical day?
2. What are the activities lately that you found were ritualistic and relatively ineffective?
3. What are the tasks this week that you found could have been delegated?
4. What tasks did you do this week that could have been simplified?
5. What single activity or habit that wastes your time most?

Which of the following Time Enhancers have you tried lately?

- Listen to radio and TV news shows to keep up on the latest news; this should enable you to skim through newspapers and magazines.
- Limit recreational TV watching to one hour a day.
- Limit all casual, idle, or gossip chatter to five minutes.
- Open and sort through mail as soon as it arrives at your desk or home; handle each piece only once.
- Using the “automatic dialing and redial’’ telephone to speed up making and returning phone recalls.
- Use a timer to help you limit phone calls to less than five minutes.
- Hold as few meetings as possible; use an agenda and stick to it; limit the time to no more than one hour for each meeting.
- Pay each bill on the day it arrives in the mail, keeping the entries in your check-book accurate and up to date.
- Use daydreaming as a form of stress release or relaxation, and limit it to a total of fifteen minutes per day.
- Get professional help for personal problems if you find thinking about them occupies a lot of your free time.
- Use a tape recorder with ear phones to listen to motivational tapes, relaxation tapes, or soft relaxing music when in traffic or on a commuter bus, train, plane, etc.
- Use a daily schedule book or “date minder’’ to create a log of scheduled activi-ties to help you review your success at managing your time.
- Bring books and mail to read or a tape recorder to listen to when you have ap-pointments where you know you will be waiting for a length of time.
- Eliminate naps and extend your nightly sleep time or increase your daily exercise schedule to increase your energy level.

- Eliminate snacking between meals; eat three balanced meals a day
- Give up smoking (cigarettes, cigars or pipes).
- Give up the need for a “quick one’’ at your local bar, tavern, or lounge.
- Exchange alcoholic consumption time for exercise or some other time enhancer.
- Go shopping with a list, stick to the list, and leave when you have completed your list.
- Avoid browsing shopping unless it is a planned social, couple, or family shopping activity.
- Find alternative leisure activities that require no betting of legal tender.

Study your answer and take steps necessary to eliminate your time wasters.

Time Tips

1. Count all your time as time to be used and make every attempt to get satisfaction out of every moment.
2. Find something to enjoy in whatever you do.
3. Try to be an optimist and seek out the good in your life.
4. Find ways to build on your successes.
5. Stop regretting your failures and start learning from your mistakes.
6. Remind yourself, “There is always enough time for the important things.” If it is important, you should be able to make time to do it.
7. Continually look at ways of freeing up your time.
8. Examine your old habits and search for ways to change or eliminate them.
9. Try to use waiting time-review notes or do practice problems.
10. Keep paper or a calendar with you to jot down the things you have to do or notes to yourself.
11. Examine and revise your lifetime goals on a monthly basis and be sure to include progress towards those goals on a daily basis.
12. Put up reminders in your home or office about your goals.
13. Always keep those long term goals in mind.
14. Plan your day each morning or the night before and set priorities for yourself.
15. Maintain and develop a list of specific things to be done each day, set your priorities and then get the most important ones done as soon in the early part of the day as you can. Evaluate your progress at the end of the day briefly.
16. Look ahead in your month and try and anticipate what is going to happen so you can better schedule your time.

17. Try rewarding yourself when you get things done as you had planned, especially the important ones.
18. Do first things first.
19. Have confidence in yourself and in your judgement of priorities and stick to them no matter what.
20. When you catch yourself procrastinating-ask yourself, “What am I avoiding?”
21. Start with the most difficult parts of projects, then either the worst is done or you may find you don’t have to do all the other small tasks.
22. Catch yourself when you are involved in unproductive projects and stop as soon as you can.
23. Find time to concentrate on high priority items or activities.
24. Concentrate on one thing at a time.
25. Put your efforts in areas that provide long term benefits.
26. Push yourself and be persistent, especially when you know you are doing well.
27. Think on paper when possible-it makes it easier to review and revise.
28. Be sure and set deadlines for yourself whenever possible.
29. Delegate responsibilities whenever possible.
30. Ask for advice when needed.

Adapted from A. Lakein. *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*

Appendix

Time Management Facts and Figures

80% of “crisis management” events are preventable.

One hour of planning will save 10 hours of doing.

Good time managers do not allocate their time to those who “demand” it, but rather to those who “deserve” it.

The most powerful word in our time management vocabulary is “no.”

Delegation is an unlimited method to multiply time for achieving results.

The hardest part about delegation is simply letting go “If you want a job done right, you have to do it yourself.”

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Time Management Facts and Figures

- Nine out of 10 people daydream in meetings.

- 60% of meeting attendees take notes to appear as if they are listening.

- When someone is asking for our time for a meeting, 80% of the time there is an alternate date and time that will be acceptable.

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Time Management Facts and Figures

- The average person gets one interruption every eight minutes, or approximately seven an hour, or 50-60 per day. The average interruption takes five minutes, totaling about four hours, or 50% of the average workday. 80% of those interruptions are typically rated as “little value” or “no value” creating approximately three hours of wasted time per day.

20% of the average workday is spent on “crucial” and “important” things, while 80% of the average workday is spent on things that have “little value” or “no value.”

In the last 20 years, working time has increased by 15% and leisure time has decreased by 33%.

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Time Management Facts and Figures

A person who works with a “messy” or cluttered desk spends, on average, 1-1/2 hours per day looking for things or being distracted by things, or approximately 7-1/2 hours per workweek. “Out of sight; out of mind.” When it’s in sight, it’s in mind.

- The average worker sends and receives 190 messages per day.

- The average person today receives more information on a daily basis, than the average person received in a lifetime in 1900.

- 70% of business and professional people use a “to do” list on a regular basis to administer their “have to’s.”

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Time Management Facts and Figures

It almost always takes twice as long to complete a task as what we originally thought it would take.

- “A project tends to expand with the time allocated for it.” If you give yourself one thing to do, it will take all day. If you give yourself two things to do, you get them both done. If you give yourself a dozen things to do, you may not get 12 done, but you’ll get seven or eight completed.

- “If you want to get something done, give it to a busy person.”

- The “20/80 Rule” tells us we will typically accomplish 80% of our results through 20% of our effort. The other 20% of additional results comes from about 80% of additional effort.

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Time Management Facts and Figures

- The average reading speed is approximately 200 words per minute. The average working person reads two hours per day. A speed reading course that will improve the reading rate to 400 words per minute will save an hour per day.

- We retain 10% of what we read. We retain 20% of what we hear. We retain 30% of what we see. We retain 50% of what we hear and see. We retain 70% of what we say. We retain 90% of what we do.

- Taking five minutes per day, five days per week to improve one’s job will create 1,200 little improvements to a job over a five-year period.

Dr. Donald E. Wetmore -Productivity Institute

Suggested Readings

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Handbook on Stress Management Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Knowledge • Technology • People

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Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for the personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature from the academia and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive ‘guides’ or ‘how to’ booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills, essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service delivery at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Stress Management Skills,* focuses on how the personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to deal with stress in a variety of contexts.

1 Understanding Stress

> "It's not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it."
>
> - Hans Selye

Time Magazine (June, 1983) called stress "The Epidemic of the Eighties," and regarded it as the leading health problem. There can be little doubt that the situation has progressively worsened since then. Contemporary stress tends to be even more pervasive, persistent and insidious. Recent statistics reveal that:

- Stress is now the number one reason behind sickness from work." (Gee Publishing Survey)
- "More than two-thirds of people are suffering from work related stress." (ICM Research)
- "Stress in the workplace is undermining performance and productivity in 9 out of 10 organizations." (Industrial Society)

Stress is defined as the emotional and physical strain caused by a person's response to pressure from the outside world. It occurs when there is a mismatch between what the people aspire to do what they are capable of doing. In other words, stress results when the pressure to perform a certain task is greater than the resources available to perform it.

S = P > R

[S - Stress; P-Pressure; R- Resource]

Stress is not altogether a modern phenomenon. Stress has been of concern in the medical profession since the days of Hippocrates. Walter Cannon, a physiologist at Harvard, however, formalized the modern notion of stress, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cannon described the "flight or fight response", a heightened arousal state that prepares an organism to deal with threats. When under threat, one's body releases a rush of adrenaline in order to allow a 'fight or flight' response (i.e. to give

the push one needs to fight the threat or to run away from it).

Medical research suggests that some thirty hormones are released as part of the body's automatic and innate "fight or flight" stress response. These hormones provide quick energy to cope with emergencies and exigencies. Stress hormones often build and, without release, contribute to wear and tear. Excessive stress can inhibit the body's immune system functioning and directly impair the functioning of key body systems. This is the reason why stress can increase one's susceptibility to illness, exacerbate an illness, or protract recovery from an illness.

Unrelieved stress, over time, can take the form of:

- Tense muscles that lead to headache, neck-ache, jaw-ache, back-ache
- Stomach pain, indigestion, bowel upset, ulcers
- Feelings of anxiety, nervousness, tension, helplessness
- Increasing anger or irritability, chest pain
- Depression, exhaustion, lack of concentration, insomnia
- Restlessness, boredom, confusion, the impulse to run and hide

Persons who are stressed may "take out" their frustration on those around them. Others may keep their feelings to themselves and experience a sullen gloomy feeling or a sense of isolation.

The Physiology of Stress

Our bodies' reaction to stress is rooted in our ancestry. In earlier times, stress had a survival value. All animals have inherent in them an emergency reaction to get themselves out of danger quickly. This is what is often called the 'Fight or Flight' or 'Alarm' reaction. When the mind perceives a threat the 'Alarm Button' or hypothalamus in the brain is pressed.

The brain then sends out messages to different parts of the body, which is immediately prepared for action, system by system.

1. The muscles - become tense.
2. The adrenal glands - these are situated above our kidneys and release stress hormones to get the reaction going and sustain it.
3. The heart - beats faster. Blood pressure rises. The major blood vessels dilate and more blood is therefore sent to vital organs e.g. the muscles needed to run away or to fight.
4. The lungs - faster breathing increases the oxygen supply to produce energy, and eliminate the waste carbon dioxide.
5. The liver - releases glycogen (stored sugar) into the blood supply, raising blood glucose for energy
6. Stored fats - are released, again for use as energy by the muscles.
7. The skin - sweats to keep us cool.
8. The eyes - pupil dilates to improve our sideways vision to find a way of escape.
9. The digestive system - slows down and almost stops temporarily, as the blood is diverted to more important organs e.g. muscles. The food stays longer in the stomach, the bowel slows down and the bowel sphincters close.
10. The bladder sphincters close.

There are many other changes, but these are the most important. This reflex was a life-saver for our prehistoric ancestors who had to ‘fight’ or ‘flee’ regularly to save their lives. Occasionally, it is useful for us if we need to respond very rapidly on a physical level to a threat - for example, if we are charged by a bull whilst sitting in a field! A surge of energy will help us reach the gate in time. It is an emergency reaction for use in the short term only, followed by a time for ‘winding down’ after the chase or the fight, during which the affected

organs in the body can return to normal. Problems develop when the reaction is sustained for longer periods as happens too frequently in the present day and in war-torn regions. The perceived 'threats' in modern society are less likely to be physical attacks on us. Rather, they take the form of psychological pressures resulting from the many different and often conflicting demands made on us, as we attempt to fulfill expectations laid on us in our various roles as workers, parents, partners, colleagues, friends etc. When experiencing 'distress' the body systems are put out of balance and then remain in this state, resulting all too often in ill health. The irony is that what was intended as a life saving reflex is now one of the major causes of serious illness in our society.

A. Brown, Remedial Massage Therapist, L.C.S.P. (Assoc)

unresolved stress may also manifest itself through increased consumption of alcohol, drugs, food, caffeine or tobacco. These behaviours ordinarily mask your stressors rather than empower you to deal with them.

Symptoms of Stress

Below are some of the symptoms of stress listed out by Palmer, S. and Dryden, W. (Counselling for Stress Problems). It should be noted that these symptoms can also occur with a range of medical or psychological disorders.

Behavioural Symptoms

Restlessness

Loss of appetite/ overeating

Aggression/ irritability

Poor driving

Accident proneness

Sleep disturbances/ insomnia

Increased nicotine/ caffeine intake

Avoidance/ phobias

Impaired speech/ voice tremor Anorexia, bulimia

Poor time management

Behavioural Symptoms

- Appetite changes - too much or too littel
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia
- Increased intake of alcohol & other durgs
- Increased smoking
- Restlessness
- Fidgeting
- Nail biting
- Hypochondria

Compulsive behaviour

Checking rituals

Tics, spasms

Nervous cough

Low productivity

Withdrawing form relationships

Clenched fists

Teeth grinding

Talking/walking/eating faster

Increased absenteeism

Decreased/ increased sexual activity

Sulking behavior

Frequent crying

Unkempt appearance

Poor eye contact

Alcohol/drug abuse

MENTAL SYMPTOMS

- Lack of concentration
- Memory lapses
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Panic attacks

Emotional Symptoms

Anxiety

Depression

Anger

Guilt

Hurt

Morbid jealousy

Shame/ embarrassment

Suicidal feelings

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Bouts of depression
- Impatience
- Fits of rage
- Tearfulness
- Deterioration of personal hygiene and appearance

Physical Symptoms

Tension

Headaches

Palpitations

Rapid heart beat

Nausea

Tremors/ inner tremors

Aches/ pains

Dizziness/ feeling faint

Indigestion

Butterflies in stomach

Spasms in stomach

Numbness

Dry mouth

Cold sweat

Clammy hands

Abdominal cramps

Sensory flashbacks

Pain

Imagery Symptoms

Helplessness

Isolation/being alone

Losing control

Accidents/injury

Failure

Humiliation/ shame/ embarrassment

Nightmares/ distressing recurring dreams

Visual flashbacks

Poor self-image

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Sleep pattern changes
- Fatigue
- Digestion changes
- Loss of sexual drive
- Headaches
- Aches and pains
- Infections
- Indigestion
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Sweating & trembling
- Tingling hands & feet
- Breathlessness
- Palpitations
- Missed heartbeats

Cognitive Symptoms

I must perform well

Life should not be unfair

Self/other-damning statements

Low frustration statements e.g. I can't stand it.

I must be in control

It's awful, terrible, horrible, unbearable etc.

I must have what I want

I must obey 'my' moral code and rules

Others must approve of me

Cognitive distortions e.g. all or nothing thinking

Interpersonal Symptoms

Passive/ aggressive in relationships

Timid/ unassertive

Loner

No friends

Competitive

Put other's needs before own

Sycophantic behaviour

Withdrawn

Makes friends easily/ with difficulty

Suspicious/ secretive

Manipulative tendencies

Gossiping

Biological Symptoms

Flu/common cold

Lowered immune system

Poor nutrition, exercise and recreation

Organic problems

Diarrhoea/ constipation/flatulence

Frequent urination

Allergies/skin rash

High blood pressure/ coronary heart disease(angina/heart attack)

Dry skin

Chronic fatigue/ exhaustion/ burn-out

Cancer

Diabetes

Rheumatoid arthritis

Asthma

Biologically based mental disorders

Epilepsy

Use of: drugs, stimulants, alcohol, tranquillizer, hallucinogens

Eustress and Distress

Not all stress is detrimental. Indeed, a certain amount of stress in life is desirable. It relieves monotony, spurs people toward worthwhile goals, and is an integral part of many pleasurable activities: the joy experienced with successful accomplishments, for example. Selye coined the word “eustress” (good stress) to refer to stress of this kind, and to distinguish it from distress, which is prejudicial to health and well-being.

Eustress or positive stress occurs when the level of stress is high enough to motivate a person to move into action to get things accomplished. Eustress provides a sense of urgency and alertness needed for survival when confronting threatening situations.

Distress or negative stress occurs when the level of stress is either too high or too low and the body and/or mind begin to respond negatively to the stressors. It is a contributory factor to ill-health, such as headaches, digestive problems, skin complaints, insomnia and ulcers. Excessive, prolonged and unrelieved stress can have a harmful effect on mental, physical and spiritual health.

WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF STRESS?

This self-assessment test is developed by two American psychologists Holmes and Rahe ('the social readjustment rating scale' Psychosomatic Medicine), which lists 43 life events and helps you learn how much obvious stress you have in your life.

Examine yourself whether you are experiencing any of the below symptoms of stress. Next, look for your score at the end of this self-test and you will discover your personal stress rating.

Physical symptoms	Emotional symptoms
• tightness in chest • chest pain and/or palpitations • indigestion • breathlessness • nausea • muscle twitches • aches and pains • headaches • skin conditions • recurrence of previous illnesses/ allergies • constipation/ diarrhea • weight loss or weight gain • change in menstrual cycle for women • sleep problems/tiredness	• mood swings • feeling anxious • feeling tense • feelings of anger • feeling guilty • feelings of shame • having no enthusiasm • becoming more cynical • feeling out of control • feeling helpless • decrease in confidence/self-esteem • poor concentration
Behavioral symptoms	**Psychological symptoms and negative thoughts**
• drop in work performance • more inclined to become accident-prone • drinking and smoking more • overeating/ loss of appetite • change in sleeping patterns • poor time management • too busy to relax • withdrawing from family and friends • loss of interest in sex • poor judgment • inability to express feelings • over-reacting	• 'I am a failure' • 'I should be able to cope' • Why is everyone getting at me?' • 'no one understands' • 'I don't know what to do' • 'I can't cope' • 'What's the point?' • 'I don't seem to be able to get on top of things' • 'I keep forgetting where I put things' • loss of judgment

Stress Self Test

Add up your score to check how stressed you are.

0 – 4 symptoms: You are unlikely to be stressed.

5 – 8 symptoms: You are experiencing a mild form of stress and are not coping as well as you can. You need to make some changes.

9 – 12 symptoms: You are experiencing a moderate degree of stress. You need to make major changes to your life.

13 or more symptoms: You need to take urgent action to reduce your stress levels. The higher your score the more urgent is the need for action.

2 Different Kinds of Stress

American Physiological Association classifies stress into three categories - acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress — each with its own characteristics, symptoms, duration, and treatment approaches.

1. Acute Stress

Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. A fast run down a challenging ski slope, for example, is exhilarating early in the day. That same ski run late in the day is taxing and wearing. Skiing beyond limits can lead to falls and broken bones. By the same token, overdoing on short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension headaches, upset stomach, and other symptoms.

Because it is short term, acute stress doesn't have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- emotional distress: some combination of anger or irritability, anxiety, and depression, the three stress emotions;
- muscular problems including tension, headache, back pain, jaw pain, and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems;
- stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acidity, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation, and irritable bowel syndrome;
- elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath, and chest pain.

Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life, and it is highly treatable and manageable.

2. Episodic Acute Stress

The symptoms of episodic acute stress are the symptoms of extended over arousal: persistent tension headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain, and heart disease.

Treating episodic acute stress requires intervention on a number of levels, generally requiring professional help, which may take many months.

Often, lifestyle and personality issues are so ingrained and habitual with those suffering episodic acute stress that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They blame their woes on other people and external events. Frequently, they see their lifestyle, their patterns of interacting with others, and their ways of perceiving the world as part and parcel of who and what they are.

Sufferers can be fiercely resistant to change. Only the promise of relief from pain and discomfort of their symptoms can keep them in treatment and on track in their recovery program.

3. Chronic Stress

Chronic stress comes when a person never sees a way out of a miserable situation. It's the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable period. With no hope, the individual gives up searching for solutions.

Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic, early childhood experiences; get internalized and remain forever painful and present. Some experiences profoundly affect personality. A view of the world, or a belief system, is created that causes unending stress for the individual. When personality or deep-seated convictions and beliefs must be reformulated, recovery requires active self-examination, often with professional help.

The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. They forget it is there. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new; they ignore chronic stress because it is old, familiar, and sometimes, almost comfortable.

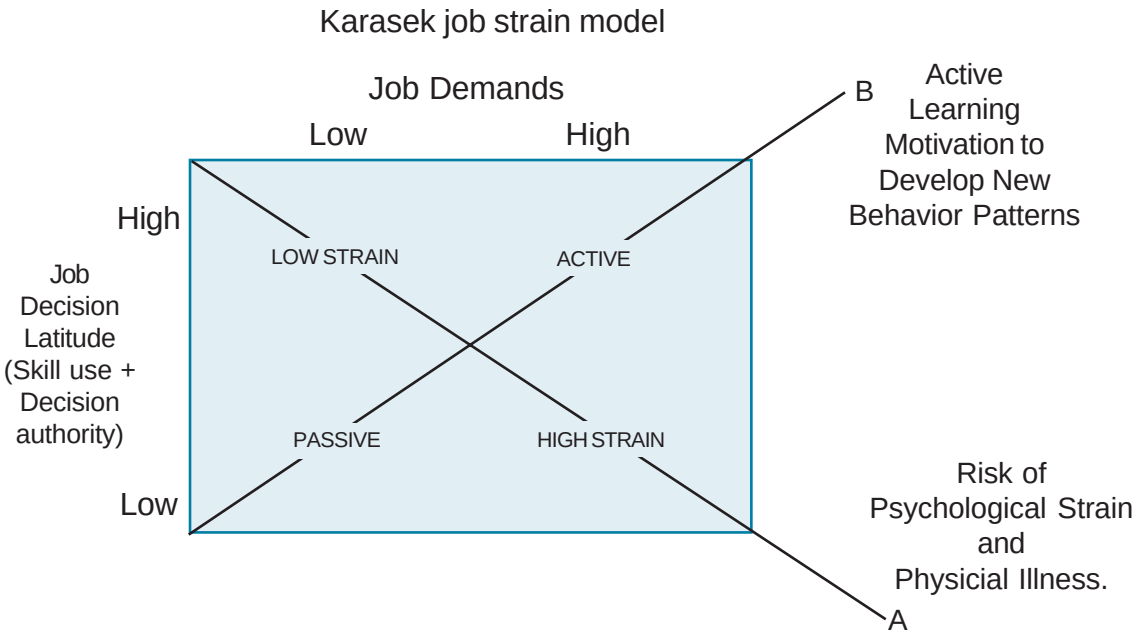
Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, heart attack, stroke, and, perhaps, even cancer. People wear down to a final, fatal breakdown. Because physical and mental resources are depleted through long-term attrition, the symptoms of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may require extended medical as well as behavioral treatment and stress management.

3 Stress & Illness – A 'Job-Strain' Model

Medical research in recent times has focused on the workplace as a potential source of stressors that might contribute to the development of hypertension and coronary diseases. The Job-Strain Model developed by Robert Karasek based on a study provides evidence for the hypothesis. Karasek's argues that work stress and the resulting physical and mental health effects of work stress result "not from a single aspect of the work environment, but from the joint effects of the demands of a work situation and the range of decision-making freedom (discretion) available to the worker facing those demands. Job strain occurs when job demands are high and job decision latitude is low".

Decision latitude is an operationalization of the concept of control and has often been defined as the combination of job decision-making authority and the opportunity to use and develop skills on the job. The "job strain" model states that the combination of high job demands and low job decision latitude will lead to negative physical health outcomes such as hypertension and cardiovascular disease (CVD). In addition, the model contains important predictions regarding the socialization of personality traits and behavior patterns which occur at work.

Chronic adaptation to low control-low demand situations ("passive" jobs) can result in reduced ability to solve problems or tackle challenges, and feelings of depression, or "learned helplessness". Conversely, when high job demands are matched with greater authority and skill use (controllable stressors, or "active" jobs), more active learning and greater internal locus of control (or belief that one is very much in control of the situation) develop. This can enable individuals to develop a broader range of coping strategies.



As depicted in the diagram, the “job strain” model has two components - increasing risk of heart disease following arrow A, but increasing activity, participation, self esteem, motivation to learn, and sense of accomplishment following arrow B. Thus, this model provides a justification for greater work autonomy as well as increased workplace democracy.

Peter Schnall (“A Brief Introduction to Job Strain”) asserts that “considerable evidence exists linking ‘job strain’ to hypertension and coronary heart disease. Over the last decade more than 40 studies on “job strain” and heart disease and 20 studies on “job strain” and heart disease risk factors have been published throughout the world providing strong evidence that “job strain” is a risk factor for heart disease. Of the eight studies where an ambulatory (portable) blood pressure monitor was worn during a work day, five showed strong positive associations between “job strain” and blood pressure, while three others provided mixed results. Since ambulatory blood pressure is both more reliable (since there is no observer bias and the number of readings is greatly increased) and more valid (since blood pressure is measured during a person’s normal daily activities including work) than casual measures of blood pressure, we feel confident in placing more emphasis on the ambulatory blood pressure results.”

4 Stressors and Stress Factors

In recent times, there has been increasing interest in distinguishing the effects of physical and psychosocial workplace stressors on the aetiology of work-related health disorders Generally, people are prone to either internal or external stressors, and both types have physical or psychological origins. Physical external stressors include unpleasant environmental conditions such as pain or hot and cold temperatures. Physical internal stressors include things like infections or inflammation.

External psychological stressors are such things as poor working conditions or conflicting relationships. External psychological stressors include:

- **Physical Environment**
  - Noise
  - Poor Lighting
  - Heat
  - Confined Spaces
- **Social Interaction**
  - Rudeness
  - Bossiness
  - Aggressiveness
  - Bullying
- **Organisational**
  - Rules
  - Regulations
  - Deadlines
- **Major Life Events**
  - Birth
  - Death
  - Transfer
  - Promotion

- Marital problems

- **Daily Hassles**
  - Commuting
  - Mechanical breakdowns

Internal psychological stress can often be the most harmful because there is frequently no resolution to the stressful situation. These stressors are anxieties about events that may or may not happen, and the stress response continues to be active as long as one is worrying about it. The internal psychological stressors include:

- **Lifestyle choices**
  - Caffeine
  - Lack of sleep
  - Overloaded schedule

- **Negative self – talk**
  - Pessimistic thinking
  - Self criticism
  - Over analysing

- **Mind traps**
  - Unrealistic expectations
  - Taking things personally
  - All or nothing thinking
  - Exaggeration
  - Rigid thinking

- **Personality traits**
  - Perfectionists
  - Workaholics

Stress can affect the overall performance of a manager and for some could result in serious ill health - both mental and physical. Such ailments as hypertension, coronary thrombosis,

migraine and peptic ulcers are only a few of the illnesses recognized as having a stress-related background. In the workplace it has been seen, through on-going research, to have a very detrimental effect. Common causes of stress within the workplace include:

- **The Drive for Success**: Modern society is driven by 'work'. Personal adequacy equates with professional success and people crave for status and abhor failure. The demand for monetary success / professional status is simply overwhelming.
- **Working Conditions**: Physical and mental health is adversely affected by unpleasant working conditions, such as high noise levels, lighting, temperature and unsocial or excessive hours.
- **Overwork**: Stress may occur through inability to cope with the technical or intellectual demands of a particular task. Circumstances such as long hours, unrealistic deadlines and frequent interruptions will compound this.
- **Underwork**: This may arise from boredom because there is not enough to do, or because a job is dull and repetitive.
- **Uncertainty**: About the work - role objectives, responsibilities, and expectations, and a lack of communication and feedback can result in confusion, helplessness, and stress.
- **Conflict**: Stress can arise from work which the individual does not want to do or that conflicts with their personal, social and family values.
- **Responsibility**: The greater the level of responsibility the greater the potential level of stress
- **Relationships at work**: Good relationships with colleagues are crucial. Open discussion is essential to encourage positive relationships.
- **Changes at work**: Changes that alter psychological, physiological and behavioural routines such as promotion, retirement and redundancy are particularly stressful.

Through timely identification and conscious intervention, managers must try to deal with the stressors. They should speak to themselves and seek answers to questions

such as:

- What are the sources and levels of stress?
- How is stress affecting their health?
- How is stress affecting performance in the workplace?
- How knowledgeable are they about managing stress?
- What additional support they need for mitigating the stress?

5 Responses to Stress

Medical professionals call the body's reaction to stress as General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). Originally described by Hans De Solye in the 1920s, the general adaptation syndrome describes a three stage reaction to stress. Stressors in humans include physical stressors - emotional or mental stressors.

Stage 1: Alarm reaction

The first stage of the general adaptation stage, the alarm reaction, is the immediate reaction to a stressor. This is the "Fight or Flight" response that prepares the body for immediate action. The physical and emotional "fight or flight" response to stress ensues automatically, as a natural defense mechanism, whether or not the threat is real. Its major characteristics are:

- Adrenaline starts pumping
- Breathing quickens
- Heart starts pounding (beats quicker, too)
- Blood pressure increases
- Blood vessels constrict
- Blood rushes from the internal organs to the muscles These reactions are a part of human inheritance, giving one the added strength one needs in emergencies. If a real threat were to materialize, one would be prepared to meet it head on. If, on the other hand, the threat is imagined, or is one that does not require a physical reaction, the pent-up energy is released.

Stage 2: Adaptation Reaction

If the stress persists, the body prepares for long-term protection, secreting hormones to increase blood sugar levels. For example, if the stressor is starvation (possibly due to anorexia), the person might experience a reduced desire for physical activity to

conserve energy, and the absorption of nutrients from food might be maximized.

Behavior indicators include lack of enthusiasm for family, school, work or life in general, withdrawal, change in eating habits, insomnia, hypersomnia, anger, fatigue. Cognitive indicators include poor problem-solving, confusion, nightmares, hyper-vigilance.

This phase is common and not necessarily harmful, but must include periods of relaxation and rest to counterbalance the stress response. Fatigue, concentration lapses, irritability and lethargy result as the stress turns negative.

Stage 3: Exhaustion Reaction

In chronic stress situations, sufferers enter the exhaustion phase: emotional, physical and mental resources suffer heavily, the body experiences ‘adrenal exhaustion’ leading to decreased stress tolerance, progressive mental and physical exhaustion, illness and collapse. It means the immune system and the body’s ability to resist disease, may be almost totally eliminated. People who experience long-term stress may succumb to heart attacks or severe infection due to their reduced immunity. For example, a person with a stressful job may experience long-term stress that might lead to high blood pressure and an eventual heart attack.

Although stress can cause ill-health or disease, Huethner G (“The central adaptation syndrome: Psychosocial stress as a trigger for adaptive modifications of brain structure and brain function”} suggests that long-term stress may cause humans to better adapt to their environment. He argues that severe, long-term stress can cause persons to reject long-held assumptions or behaviors, and that stress can actually help the brain make physical changes that reflect these mental or emotional changes. In short, stress might allow persons to change the way they think and act for the better.

6 Coping with Stress – A 5-Step Framework

Each stress-provoking situation or event is different, as is each individual. Therefore, each situation or event that precipitates stress requires a unique approach. Owen Moran, a health educator at Concordia University (Canada), recommends the following 5-step framework can be used to help individuals design their own stress management plan.

Step 1: Identify if the person is stressed.

This can be difficult, as some signs and symptoms of stress are also those of medical problems. One can identify his/her own response to stress, which tends to be stable over time. When he/she experiences this group of signs and symptoms, he/she should consider that stress might be an issue. One can also identify if there have been recent changes that may create a demand or threat. Others close to the individual may help to identify if he/she is stressed.

Step 2: Identify the stressor(s).

Stress is usually related to change. So looking at recent changes in one's life is a good place to start. One can narrow down the stress-related changes by looking back at when the symptoms started. Again, close friends and family members might be able to shed some light on what is causing the stress.

Step 3: Determine the reason for this stressor.

For an event or situation to be stress provoking, it must be perceived as demanding or threatening. A person must assess that he/she does not have the resources needed to effectively address a situation or event. This step requires honesty and self-reflection. Some people may not be able to immediately identify why an event or situation leads to stress. This is particularly true if the reason for the stressor is a personal characteristic or way of thinking.

Examining beliefs, values, and attitudes as well as stress-promoting ways of thinking may help narrow down the reason for the stressor. Looking for patterns in previous stressful situations may also help. Again, people close to the individual may help provide answers.

Step 4: Select and apply an appropriate stress management strategy or skill.

There are potentially thousands of stress management strategies. Here is a 3-level approach:

Level 1: If something can be done about the stressor... it should be done! This is perhaps the best and most effective way to reduce stress. The aim is to address the cause of stress and preferably eliminate it or at least reduce it to make it manageable. This can be done in several ways:

- Avoid or eliminate the event or situation that is stressful (e.g., avoiding visitors if one is overwhelmed with work).
- Reduce the intensity of the stressor (e.g., providing information to clarify a situation or event).
- Reduce exposure to the stressor (e.g., run errands away from peak hours).

Level 2: Short-term stress management strategies and skills: If the stressor can not be eliminated or reduced to manageable levels within a short period of time, the stress management approach will likely be long-term. While one is taking measures to reduce stress in the long term (see Level 3), one will need to deal with the symptoms of stress as they surface. The goal here is to reverse the stimulating effects of the "fight or flight" response through activities that relax. Some common relaxation techniques that a person can use are breathing exercises, meditation, visualization, massage, exercise, humor, hot bath or a hobby.

Level 3: Long-term stress management strategies: The third level of stress management strategies are called long-term strategies, because they are things that cannot be changed overnight. Many of these strategies aim to modify ways of thinking (perceptions) that contribute to stress:

- Modify stress producing beliefs, attitudes, and values (cognitive restructuring).
- Dispute irrational beliefs (a belief is a principle accepted as true, especially without proof).

- Modify stress-provoking attitudes, for example a way a person views something or tends to behave towards it, often in an evaluative way.
- Examine values — an assessment or estimation of the worth, merit, or desirability of something.
- Become a positive thinker. Keeping a positive attitude and looking for the best in people and in situations is an excellent stress management strategy.
- Re-label emotions, which can shift the perception of a situation or an event.
- Talk things out with someone.
- Cultivate healthy relationships.
- Build skills, such as time management, problem-solving, conflict resolution/ negotiation, and communication.

Step 5: Evaluate.

To do this, one has go back to step one and see if he/she is stressed. Are they still experiencing the symptoms of stress? If the answer is “no”, they can pat themselves on the back. But they should be prepared, because this certainly won’t be the last time that they will experience stress. If the answer to the “Am I still stressed?” question is “yes,” they should go through the stress management steps again. Perhaps they didn’t accurately identify the stressor or the reason it was a stressor. Perhaps they selected an ineffective stress management strategy.

Know Yourself

What is BMR?

BMR stands for **Basal Metabolic Rate**, the minimum calorific requirement needed to sustain life in your body when you are resting. It is also called Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR).

Even if you are in bed asleep all day, your body still needs energy to pump blood around the body, maintain body temperature, etc.

Does BMR formula include my activity level?

No, it does not. Basal Metabolic Rate is estimated using your weight, height and age (see BMR formulas below). BMR is gender specific. BMR Calculator prompts you to enter your activity level in order to calculate the number of calories you need daily to maintain your current weight.

What is BMR formula?

English BMR Formula:

Women: BMR = 655 + (4.35 x weight in pounds) + (4.7 x height in inches) - (4.7 x age in years)

Men: BMR = 66 + (6.23 x weight in pounds) + (12.7 x height in inches) - (6.8 x age in years)

Metric BMR Formula:

Women: BMR = 655 + (9.6 x weight in kilos) + (1.8 x height in cm) - (4.7 x age in years)

Men: BMR = 66 + (13.7 x weight in kilos) + (5 x height in cm) - (6.8 x age in years)

Calculating your BMR:

	Age (years)	Equation
Men:	18-30	6.95 x body weight (lbs) + 6 79
	30-60	5.27 x body weight (lbs) + 879
Women:	18-30	6.68 x body weight (lbs) + 496
	30-60	3.95 x body weight (lbs) + 829

Your BMR is _____kcal/day.

Estimate your Activity Factor:

	Level of activity	Activity Factor
Very light	Seated and standing activities, driving, playing cards, computer work	1.2
Light	Walking, sailing, bowling, light stretching, golf, woodworking, playing pool	1.4
Moderate	Jogging, aerobic dance, light swimming, biking, calisthenics, carrying a load	1.6
Strenuous	Stairmaster, ski machine, racquet sports, running, soccer, basketball, obstacle course, digging, carrying a load uphill, rowing	1.9
Exceptional	running or swimming races, cycling uphill, hard rowing, carrying heavy loads	2.3

Your Activity Factor is _____

Calculate you Estimated Energy Requirement (EER):

Energy needs = _____ X _____

BMR Activity Factor

Your EER = _____ kcal/day.

Measure Yourself

Calculate your BMI:

Your BMI = _____ X 705 = (_____)^2 = _____.

body weight(lbs) height (in) ratio

Ratio	Classification
<20	Underweight
20-25	Normal
25-30	Overweight
>30	Obese

Website options: http://www.caloriecontrol.org/bmi.html

Calculate your Waist-to-Hip Ratio:

Your WHR = _____ + _____ = _____.

waist circumference (in) hip circumference (in) ratio

Standards for Waist-to-Hip Ratios

Men:	<0.95
Women:	<0.80

7 Coping with Stress – Physical Techniques

In the past, daily work was largely physical. Now that physical exertion is no longer a requirement for earning a living, people do not get rid of stress so easily. It accumulates very quickly. People need to develop a regular exercise program to reduce the effects of stress before it becomes distress. Regular physical activity improves health in the following ways:

- Reduces the risk of dying prematurely
- Reduces the risk of dying from heart disease
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure
- Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure.
- Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
- Helps control weight.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling.
- Promotes psychological well-being

Some of the physical stress-busters are explained below:

1. Stretching Exercise: Regular physical exertion of any intensity helps discharge muscle tension and builds strength, resilience and energy. Here is a simple stretching exercise managers can practice sitting right at the desk. Try to do 3-4 exercises at least once every hour of continuous work, breaking for 5-10 minutes. Try to do exercise 1 more frequently. Adopt a good posture with shoulders and arms relaxed. Perform each stretch smoothly and SLOWLY, avoid jerky and bouncy movements. (Source: www.bbk.ac.uk – Stretching Exercises at Your Desk)

1. Neck Stretch – Sit tall. Keep face forward; try to touch your left shoulder with your left ear. Hold for 6 seconds. Return head upright. Repeat on the right. Do not tense or hunch your shoulders. Repeat 6 times on both sides.

2. Diagonal Neck Stretch – Turn your head slightly towards the right and then look down as if you are looking in your pocket. Stay like this for 15 seconds and then relax. Now do the same on your left side. Do this exercise for three times on each side.

3. Cable Stretch – While sitting with chin in, shoulders relaxed, hands relaxed in lap, and feet flat on the floor, imagine a cable pulling the head upward. Hold for 3 seconds and relax. Repeat 3 times.

4. Shoulder Shrug – Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears and hold for approximately 3 seconds. Rotate shoulders back and down. Repeat 10 times.

5. Executive Stretch – While sitting, lock hands behind head, bring elbows back as far as possible. Inhale deeply while leaning back and stretching. Hold for 20 seconds. Exhale and relax. Repeat 1 time.

6. Foot Rotation – while sitting, slowly rotate each from the ankle. Rotate each foot 3 times in one direction, then 3 times in the opposite direction. Relax. Repeat 1 time.

7. Hand Shake – While sitting, drop arms to the side; shake hands downward gently. Repeat frequently.

8. Wrist Stretch – Hold arm straight in front of you. Pull the hand backwards with the other hand, then pull downward. Hold for 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times each.

<u>Other Exercises</u>

1. Deep Breathing – While standing or in an otherwise relaxed position, place one hand on the abdomen and the other on the chest, inhale slowly through the nose. Hold for four seconds. Exhale slowly through the mouth. Repeat.

2. Eye Comfort Exercises – Blinking and yawning (produces tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes). Expose eyes to natural light.

3. Palming – While seated, brace elbows on the desk and close to the desk edge. Let weight fall forward, cup hands over eyes, close eyes. Inhale slowly through nose and hold for 4 seconds. Continue deep breathing for 15-30 seconds.

4. Eye Movements – Close eyes. Slowly and gently move eyes up to the ceiling, then slowly down to the floor. Repeat 3 times. Close eyes. Slowly and gently move eyes to the left, then slowly to the right. Repeat 3 times.

5. Focus Change – Hold one finger a few inches away from the eye and focus on the finger. Slowly move the finger away. Focus far into the distance and then back to the finger. Slowly bring the finger to within few inches away from the nose. Focus on something more than 2,5km away. Repeat 3 times.

6. Hand Massage – Massage the inside and outside of the hand using the thumb and fingers. Repeat frequently (including before beginning work)

7. Finger Massage (Perform very gently) – Massage fingers of each hand individually, slowly and gently. Move towards nail gently massaging space between fingers. Perform daily.

2. Breathing Stretching Exercise: Conventional yogic breathing exercises help managers overcome anxiety and stress. Besides, it also –

- steadies the mind in concentration
- improves digestion
- increases appetite
- reduces the risk of coronary diseases.

The way to perform a breathing exercise is as follows: Sit cross-legged. Close the right nostril with the right thumb and inhale very, very slowly through the left nostril. Then with the little and ring fingers of the right hands close the left nostril. Retain breath as long as you can. Then exhale very slowly after removing the thumb. This stage constitutes one process. Again inhale through the right nostril, retain the breath and exhale through the left nostril. This ends the process. One can do 20 in the morning and 20 in the evening.

The Egyptian Breath Exercise

This relaxation technique will help you deal with high levels of stress. This exercise can be done anywhere - even at your desk.

- Sit on a chair (armless is preferable) with your right hand hanging by your side and your left hand resting on your left thigh.
- Sit upright, with a straight spine. Imagine that you have a piece of string attached to the crown of your head that is pulling you gently up, and extending your spine.
- Close your eyes and slowly breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Breathe using your diaphragm (letting your stomach out on the in breath). Do this for a minute or so until you are happy that your breathing is deep and regular.
- Next, concentrate on your heart. The blood in the heart is pumped first toward the upper right of the body. Follow, in your mind, the image of the blood flowing from the heart, towards the shoulder, down the right arm to the fingertips. When it gets to the fingertips it turns, goes back up the arm and continues its journey around the body.
- Focus on the fingertips. You should feel a gentle tingling sensation. This is not magic; it is just that your concentration is now on your fingers - not your problems. The more relaxed the muscles are, then the quicker the tingling sensation and the stronger it is. When you have repeated this exercise several times you can put yourself in a focused and relaxed state very quickly.
- Once you have reached a satisfactory level of relaxation and clarity of thought, count down slowly from ten to zero. At zero take a final full breath in and out, open your eyes, and do what you need to do.

You can stay in this state for as long as you want or need to. As a preparation for action, clearing the mind and stepping away from the speed and confusion of our daily lives, this exercise is ideal.

3. Meditation: Meditation is something which gets easier, more enjoyable and more intense with practice. Meditating (one of several activities that produce the relaxation response) for 20-30 minutes a day, over time, can lead to a generalized feeling of relaxation in many areas of one's life. Some of the benefits of deep relaxation are:

1. reduction of generalized anxiety
2. preventing stress from building up
3. increased energy and productivity
4. improved concentration and memory
5. reduction of insomnia and fatigue
6. prevention and/or reduction of psychosomatic disorders such as hypertension, migraines, headaches, asthma, ulcers
7. increased self-confidence and reduced self-blame
8. increased availability of feelings

Meditation is meant to bring about awareness, nothing else. It's a time to connect to your inner "source" and let go of the issues, responsibilities and situations that bind your life. The benefits of mediation are uniquely individual, but both physiological and psychological balancing is common. To get you started, here is an explanation of how to practice classic and simple meditation:

1. Find some time out of your daily schedule.
2. Find a quiet place and sit down.
3. Be comfortable. Relax.
4. Keep the face serene. Chin up.
5. Close your eyes slowly to experience a void darkness. (Remember to keep your eyelids closed throughout the following steps)
6. Look into your eyelids as if seeing with your eyelids open.
7. Keep your mind empty of people, place, things, color or any form.
8. Try and concentrate on the center of your forehead.
9. If thoughts arise, bypass them and keep looking with your eyelids closed, going deeper and deeper, leaving form, name, color, and activities far behind you.

10. Experience the motion of going, as if driving in a car, and you'll be going deeper and deeper - beyond the body and senses.
11. As you go deeper and deeper with your eyes closed in this dark place, you may see the swirling of smoke-like colours flickering in the darkness and silvery flashes of light.
12. Look straight in front with your eyelids closed and keep going further and further.
13. To keep you alert in meditation, take slow deep breaths. Colors will swirl and change pattern, rising with each breath.
14. Keep breathing steady. Let thoughts come and go. You're on a journey going beyond the body and form.
15. After you feel totally calm and relaxed, gradually open your eyes and spring back to life with renewed energy.

4. Visual Imagery: Visual imagery is the technique by which one creates a scenario in the mind and uses it as a means for relaxation or self-improvement. The use of this technique requires quietitude and concentration. The process of visualization is as follows:

Make yourself comfortable. Relax in your chair and close your eyes.

Count slowly from 1 to 10.

- You feel yourself relaxing.
- Your tension starts melting away like soft ice cream.
- You become very quiet, very relaxed.
- Every muscle in your body starts to go slack.
- You are now in a state of deep relaxation.
- Your tension is completely gone.
- You are totally relaxed.
- You sense this room is starting to fade away...

Now picture yourself walking slowly and quietly down a path by a mountain meadow to a quiet, still lake.

- It is early morning, the sun is shining and the air is cool and sweet.
- You can smell the sweet pines and the grass. Occasionally, a fish leaps in the water. Otherwise, the lake is very still and deep, deep blue.
- You slowly sit down on the soft grass at the edge of the lake and drink in the sight. You breathe in slowly and deeply.
- A gentle breeze moves the tall grass around you and you look up at the blue sky and see white, fluffy clouds. Suddenly, without effort, you begin to float up to these clouds.
- You can walk around in them. You lean over and scoop the clouds up with your hands. You kick at them, you go sliding on your stomach—it's all so effortless—and such fun!
- Up here, you spread your arms and slowly stretch. It is warm, the air is clean and fresh, and the sky is blue without end.
- You feel your whole body fill with fresh, clean air, and you are very peaceful.
- After a short while you decide to float gently back to the meadow. You lie back on the soft, cool grass and slowly begin to wake up. Here you are, seated comfortably. You feel wonderfully relaxed and energized. [Pause for a few seconds.]
- Now slowly open your eyes. Take your time. Enjoy the experience.

5. Diet: Healthy food habits, such as eating right, avoiding excess sugar, surfeit of fat, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco will help one handle stressful situations more effectively. A well balanced diet is crucial in preserving health and helping to reduce stress. Certain foods and drinks act as powerful stimulants to the body and hence are a direct cause of stress. This stimulation, although quite pleasurable in the short term, may be quite harmful in the long run. One will have more energy and self-confidence, and be less likely to experience the physical side-effects of stress when one eats a balanced diet, gets enough sleep, drinks enough water and exercises regularly. Indiadiets.com prescribes the following eight point plant for health diet:

1. Eat plenty of fiber, pulses, whole grains, foods made with wholegrain flour (such as wholegrain bread), and fruit and vegetables give you the benefit of fiber as well as its associated essential fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins. Grains are better only coarsely ground.

2. Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, especially green leafy ones. These give you the vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids and fiber you need. Peel the fruit as little as possible (peel and pith are nutrient rich). Cook vegetables lightly by steaming or stir-frying and eat some raw everyday to benefit from their hormones and enzymes.

3. Cut down your fat intake (especially saturated fat). Choose fish, offal (organ meat), game, poultry, whole grains, pulses, nuts and seeds, or sprouted seeds, rather than red meat and cheese.

4. Cut down your sugar intake. Use sugar as flavoring rather than as a food. Avoid cakes, sweets, chocolates, biscuits, puddings, ice-creams, jam, fruits canned in syrup, soft drinks, sugar in tea and coffee, and milk shakes.

5. Cut down your salt intake. Instead of adding salt to your food use herbs, spices, fresh ginger, horseradish, lemon juice, tomato puree, vinegar, soy sauce, vegetable stock, yeast extract, chutney, and other flavorings.

6. Cut down your consumption of processed food to avoid the " empty calories" of saturated fats, added sugar, refined cereal grains, and additives.

7. Drink only moderate amounts of alcohol.

8. If you are overweight, exercise more and consume the amount of food and drink that will enable you to reach and keep to your optimal body weight

6. Rest: Taking some quiet time can also help reduce stress. One can find a place at home and at work where one can get away from everyone and take a few minutes for oneself. One can practice any relaxation technique or simply spend the time thinking through a problematic situation. One can use the time to do whatever will help one to relax.

7. Laughter: Besides relieving muscular tension, improving breathing and pumping endorphins into the bloodstream which are body's natural painkillers, a good hearty laugh can help:

- reduce stress,
- lower blood pressure,
- elevate mood,
- boost immune system ,
- improve brain functioning,
- protect the heart,
- connect well to others,
- foster instant relaxation, and
- make you feel good.

Enda Junkins (www.laughtertheryphy.com) offers the following tips for filling more laughter in ones life:

1. Practice laughing 5 min/day. Fake it till you make it.
2. Look for humor around you - on signs, in people's behavior, on TV, in the newspaper, the things others say, the crazy things that happen to you.Keep a journal.
3. Share your embarrassing moments with other people.
4. Learn to play with things that are serious like work, social issues, money, etc. For example, use word play, silly songs, or develop a comical view of the issue to help you laugh and cope.
5. Laugh with other people when they laugh.
6. Wear a smile. It puts you closer to laughing.
7. Seek out entertainment which makes you laugh.
8. Amuse yourself with your own sense of humor.
9. Buy and listen daily to a tape of laughter, a laugh box, or a laughing toy.

10. Buy mindless toys that make you laugh.

11. Wear hats that make you laugh.

12. Cultivate your innate playfulness.

13. Be creative with fun.

14. Make sure you have fun.

16. Give yourself permission to laugh at anything you need to.

17. Do at least one silly, non-conforming thing a day.

Pleasurable Everyday Experiences That Can Help You Relax

- A warm bath
- Listen to favorite music
- A hike in the woods
- Watch a funny movie
- Phone a firend
- Eat out
- Take a nap
- Play with your children
- Enjoy a sunset
- Write in your diary
- Walk/play with your pet
- Meditate
- Pray
- Trim the roses
- Read a good book
- Enjoy a hobby
- Sit in the sunshine
- Get a massage

8 Coping with Stress – Behavioral Techniques

Along with physical techniques, managers may also choose to use various behavioural techniques to cope more effectively with stress, which include -time management, positive thinking, reframing, ventilation and problem-solving.

1. Time Management: One of the principal sources of stress is over-commitment or poor time management. Trying to take care of everything at once can seem overwhelming, and, as a result, one may not accomplish anything. Identifying the potential causes of poor time management and addressing them in time helps a great deal in reducing stress. The following chart can be handy for managers.

Poor Time-Management: Causes & Solutions

Time Waster	Possible Causes	Solutions
Lack of planning	Failure to see the benefit of planning	Recognize that planning may take time but it saves time and effort in the long run.
Lack of planning	Action-oriented	Emphasize results, not activity.
Lack of planning	Success without it	Recognize that success is often in spite of, not because of, methods.
Lack of priorities	Lack of goals and objectives	Write down goals and objectives. Discuss priorities with co-workers and family members.
Over-commitment	Broad interests	Learn to say no.
Over-commitment	Confusion in priorities	Re-assesses your goals and priorities
Over-commitment	Failure to set priorities	Develop a personal philosophy regarding time. Relate priorities to a schedule of events
Management by crisis	Lack of planning	Apply the same solutions as for lack of planning.
Management by crisis	Unrealistic time estimates	Allow more time. Allow for interruptions.
Management by crisis	Problem oriented	Be opportunity oriented

Management by crisis	Reluctance of others to break bad news	Encourage fast transmission of information as essential for timely corrective action
Telephone	Lack of self-discipline	Screen and group calls. Be brief.
Telephone	Desire to be informed and involved	Stay uninvolved with all but essentials. Manage by exception.
Meetings	Fear of responsibility for decisions.	Make decisions without meetings.
Meetings	Indecision	Make decisions even when some facts are missing.
Meetings	Over-communication	Discourage unnecessary meetings. Convene only those needed.
Meetings	Poor leadership	Use agendas. Stick to the subject. Prepare concise minutes as soon as possible.
Meetings	Indecision	Lack of confidence in the facts. Improve fact finding and validating procedures.
Meetings	Insistence on all the facts; ***paralysis by analysis***	Accept risks as inevitable. Decide without all facts.
Meetings	Fear of consequences of a mistake	Delegate the right to be wrong. Use mistakes as a learning process.
Meetings	Lack of a rational decision making process.	Get facts, set goals, investigate alternatives and negative consequences, make the decision, then implement it.
Lack of delegation	Fear of subordinates' inadequacy.	Train. Allow mistakes. Replace if necessary.
Lack of delegation	Fear of subordinates' competence	Delegate fully. Give credit. Insure corporate growth to
Lack of delegation	Work overload on subordinates	maintain challenge. Balance the workload. Reorder priorities.
Haste	Impatience with detail	Take time to get it right. Save the time of doing it over.

Haste	Responding to the urgent	Distinguish between the urgent and the important.
Haste	Lack of planning ahead	Take time to plan. It repays itself many times over.
Haste	Attempting too much in too little time.	Attempt less, delegate much more.
Paperwork & reading	Knowledge explosion	Read selectively. Learn speed reading.
Paperwork & reading	"Computeritis"	Manage computer data by exception.
Paperwork & reading	Failure to screen	Delegate reading to subordinates. Ask for summaries.
Routine & trivia	Lack of priorities	Set and concentrate on priority goals. Delegate non-essentials.
Routine & trivia	Over-surveillance of subordinates	Delegate; then give subordinates their right to do it their way. Look to results, not details or methods.
Routine & trivia	Refusal to delegate; feeling of greater security dealing with operating detail	Recognize that without delegation, it is impossible to grow. Forget perfectionism.
Visitors	Enjoyment in socializing	Do it elsewhere. Meet visitors outside work setting. Suggest lunch, if necessary or hold stand up conferences.
Visitors	Inability to say "no."	Screen. Say no. Be unavailable. Modify the open door policy.

The Positive Thinking Assessment Worksheet - Assessing Yourself

Do I take credit for positive events, or chalk them up to chance?_____

Do I expect more good things to follow, or do I view positive happenings as a fluke?_____

What do I feel about negative events? Do I blame myself, or look at extenuating circumstances? _____

Do I look at one negative event as evidence of more to come (like an omen)?_____

Do I tend to encourage myself mentally, or do I berate myself inside?_____

Would I talk to a friend or a precious child the way I talk to myself?_____

Do I tend to 'catastrophize', or see and expect the worst?_____

_____

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Once you become aware of areas where your thinking patterns could use some ‘sprucing up’, now’s the time to make changes. Below is a list of some typical negative thoughts you may have. Create a positive thought that you would like to replace it with. For example, “I just can’t do my job well enough”, could be changed to “I do my best, and my best is good enough”, or even “I am fantastic at what I do!” Then repeat these positive thoughts in your head several times any time you catch yourself in negative thought patterns. Keep this worksheet handy, and make modifications as necessary.

Source Elizabeth Scott - Your Guide to Stress Management

Remez Sasson, (SuccessConsciousness.com) offers the following tips for cultivating the habit of positive thinking:

- Always use only positive words in your inner dialogues. Use words such as, I can, I am able, it is possible, it can be done, etc.
- Accompany your inner dialogues with feelings of happiness, strength and success.
- Do not heed negative thoughts. Calmly refuse to think these thoughts, and substitute them with constructive happy thoughts.
- In your conversations with other people use words that evoke scenes of strength, happiness and success in their minds.
- Before starting with any plan or action, visualize clearly in your mind its successful outcome. If you visualize with concentration and faith, you will be amazed at the results.
- Read at least one page of inspiring literature every day.
- Watch movies that make you happy.

- Listen to the news and read the papers, but do that sparingly and with detachment.
- Associate yourself with people who think positively.
- Always sit and walk with your back straight. This will strengthen your confidence and inner strength.
- Walk, swim or engage in some other physical activity. This helps to develop a more positive attitude.

3. Reframing: Re-framing is a technique to change the way one looks at things in order to feel better about them. There are many ways to interpret the same situation. So pick the one you like. Re-framing does not change the external reality, but helps you view things in a different light and less stressfully. The sense, significance or substance of any situation is found in the frame within which we view it. “When something happens, is it good, or is it bad?” The following story (“Quality Performance in Human Services Leadership”, ed. F.Gardner and Sylvia Nudler) explains how the concept of framing or reframing depends on the mental perspective of a person.

A Russian farmer in the 1800s was out ploughing his fields one spring day and, as he unhooked the plough from his horse, his horse leaped and galloped out of his fields and into the forest. The man walked back to the village that evening and told of the event. His friends and neighbours gathered around him and exclaimed about his misfortune, saying what an unlucky day this was for him. The man said only, “You never know.”

Not more than two weeks later, the man and his son were out slowly ploughing the spring fields by themselves, when the farmer’s horse trotted back into the field along with another horse, a wild horse. When the farmer and his son arrived in the village at the end of the day, riding one horse and leading the second horse, all of their friends and neighbours gathered around them and talked about how fortunate is was that their horse went into the wild, because now they had two horses on the farm. Once again, the thoughtful farmer said only, “You never know.”

Several days later, the farmer's son broke his leg when he was thrown from the wild horse while trying to break it in and train it for farm work. That night, the villagers cursed the unfortunate day that the wild horse came to the farm. The farmer said, "You never know."

Not long after, the entire village shook when the Cossacks came roaring across the plain, going from house to house, and conscripting every man of fighting age into service until they came to the farmer's home, where they left his son with his family because of his broken leg. That night, a mourning village came together to console themselves and each other and to tell the farmer how lucky he was that the wild horse had broken his son's leg. The farmer looked at all of his neighbours and said only, "You never know."

The villagers in the story were very quick to place meaning on every event, to interpret it, and place it in the scheme of things past and future. The "frame" of meaning through which they gazed let them know how they were to feel, what was to be done next, and what to watch out for in the future. The farmer in the story saw life and circumstances through a very different lens. He extracted no meaning from events and went from event to event, from moment to moment, giving what was called for and taking what was given.

Managers must earn to get rid of negative thoughts or feeling that can result in stresses. Reframing requires that they -

1. Focus more on the positive things in life
2. Eliminate negative thinking
3. Enjoy each task and enjoy each moment

Examples of Initial Frame and Reframe

Initial frame	Reframe
• I am in a tunnel and I can't see a way out. • I am *too* anxious to study. • I know I will never be confident. • When he/she looks at me like that he/she hates me. • Beggars are criminals and might kill me. • He/she is out at night and that means that he/she does not love me any more. • He/she is so boring, stays in all the time and does not have a mind of his/her own. • He doesn't want to work. He is no good - a typical waster - a drain on us all.	• Every tunnel has an entrance and exit. • You need to be anxious enough to concentrate. • Being confident starts with having insights about our limits. • People cover up their hurt by putting a scowl on their faces. • No one deliberately wants to fall on hard times. • Private time away can help you to appreciate each other much more. • Thoughtful people put others first and are a great port in a storm — a great source of security. • Lack of jobs has forced good and honest people into unemployment. This takes away their hope and breaks their spirit and belief in work.

Adapted from the Gower Stress Management Toolkit

4. Ventilation: Often stress occurs out of frustration and lack of communication. Bottling up feelings would only accentuate stress. 'A problem shared is a problem halved'. Managers should develop a support network through friends or colleagues to talk with when they are upset or worried. Many times the simple act of 'getting it off the chest' in an appropriate manner will reduce ones stress level. They should learn positive ways to express their feelings and desires. Writing a diary or notes may help release feelings but they should not re-read what has been written.

5. Problem-Solving: Positive orientation to problem-solving helps managers to decrease their distress, enhance their sense of control, and improve their quality of life. They should strive to eliminate negative orientation to problem solving which could have a telling effect on their health and lead to conflict relationships with colleagues at workplace. They should try to -

- improve their rational problem-solving skills;
- avoid the tendency to be impulsive or careless; and
- avoid the tendency to shy away from problems when they crop up.

EXERCISE - IDENTIFYING ENERGISERS

A conscious thinking can help managers identify the potential energizers which help them successfully cope with stress and the resulting deleterious effects of it. Spare a few moments and give a quiet thought to the following questions.

What can I do to make my life more stimulating?

_____

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What can I do to make my life more fun?

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What can I do to make what I do less frustrating?

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What can I do to make my life less stressful?

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What can I do to get more creativity into my life?

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What can I do to make my life more challenging?

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What can I do to make my life less routine?

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9 Coping with Stress – Diversion Techniques

Diversion activities include such activities as engaging in a hobby, taking a nap, watching T.V., listening to music, going out to a movie, etc. It is important to realize that these activities don't address the stress directly but divert your attention for awhile.

1. Music: Medical research reveals that music can affect a person's physiological state, inducing excitement or relaxation. Listening to favourite music relives stress by:

- Providing a predictable, and "secure" environment
- Inducing feelings of well being
- Decreasing physical responses, such as heart rate and respiration
- Inducing and maintaining relaxation once it occurs
- Bringing order to chaotic situations
- Providing a break from frenetic activity.

2. Hobbies: Hobbies constitute another diversion technique for an individual or overcome pent-up frustrations stress, boredom or monotony. One can engage oneself in varied hobbies depending on one's interests. Reading, writing and collecting objects such as coins, stamps etc. help a person relax and get de-stressed. According to Harris Interactive the list of the most popular hobbies and leisure activities in descending order are as follows (**Source: Harris Interactive Inc: The Harris Poll**):

- TV watching
- Spending time with family/kids
- Fishing
- Gardening
- Swimming
- Computer activities
- Going to movies
- Walking
- Golf

- Exercise (aerobics, weights)
- Playing team sports
- Socializing with friends/neighbors
- Renting movies
- Traveling
- Listening to music
- Shopping
- Crafts (unspecified)
- Camping
- Church/church activities
- Boating
- Hunting
- Relaxing
- Sewing/crocheting
- Bicycling
- Watching sporting events
- Playing music
- Sleeping
- Beach/Sun tanning
- Bowling
- Cooking
- Entertaining
- Working on cars
- Animals/pets/dogs
- Eating out
- Painting
- Running
- Woodworking
- Hiking

3. Vacation: Taking a 'stress vacation' is not an indulgence but rather the route to sustained productivity while maintaining your energy and health. However, taking a vacation trip could be itself a source of stress if not properly conceived and organized. Folkman (Strategies To Make Your Vacation a Stress-Buster, Not Stress-Enhancer) suggests the following tips for reducing vacation stress:

- Stay in fewer places longer.
- Don't pack the schedule. Leave time open for relaxing.
- Make the vacation affordable and stay within your budget. Nothing is more stressful than spending more than you can afford.
- When vacationing with family, find ways to satisfy a little bit of everyone's needs. Help children realize that they have to make some tradeoffs too.
- Take time to genuinely appreciate where you are, what you do and those who are with you and also tell them what you appreciate.
- Have fun along the way. Make your time in a car or on a plane special. Listen to a book on tape. When everyone is interested in the story, they can't wait to get back in the car.
- Plan group as well as "alone" activities, like, an early morning walk on the beach can be the best part of a vacation.
- Balance flexibility ("We're having fun; let's do this longer.") with timeliness ("We have to be up and packed by 6 a.m. to catch the plane).
- Decide to have fun. After all, you're on a vacation!

4. Sleep: "If you can't cope with it, sleep on it," advises Sadeh. Sometimes sleep can help one regulate ones nervousness and offers an escape from stress, particularly when there is nothing one can do about it. But, why do some people lose sleep during periods of stress, while others slip into sleep quietly? Research suggests that the difference may be explained by the ways people cope. At Tel Aviv University, Dr. Avi Sadeh conducted a study of students. He found that those "who tended to focus on their emotions and anxiety during the high-stress period were more likely to shorten their sleep, while those who tended

to ignore emotions and focus on tasks extended their sleep and shut themselves off from stress."

Want a better night's sleep? Try the following tips by National Sleep Foundation.:

- Consume less or no caffeine and avoid alcohol.
- Drink less fluids before going to sleep.
- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine.
- Exercise regularly, but do so in the daytime, preferably after noon.
- Try a relaxing routine, like soaking in hot water (a hot tub or bath) before bedtime.
- Establish a regular bedtime and waketime schedule.
- Keep a sleep diary before and after you try these tips. If the quality of your sleep does not improve, share this diary with your doctor.

10 Coping with Stress - Workplace Techniques

Stress-busters specific to workplace include – Getting Organized, Delegating, Being Assertive and Balancing Work and Personal Time.

1.Getting Organized: Poor organisation is one of the most common causes of stress. Structured approaches offer security against 'out of the blue' problems. Prioritising objectives, duties and activities makes them manageable and achievable. Managers should not overload their mind. Organisation will help avoid personal and professional chaos. The following tips by Janet Taylor ("Totally Organized") are worth considering:

- Clean out each desk drawer, to free up even more valuable storage space.
- Keep essential items on your desktop (computer, phone, fax, card file).
- Have a master to-do list for each day at your desk.
- Pre-Sort the mail. To-File, To-Read, To-Contact (write or call).
- Create a separate drawer for personal paperwork, items, etc.
- Create a file for magazine articles or scan them into your computer.
- Filing system should be simple, easy and manageable.
- Colour-coding your files make it faster to find information.
- Return calls in batches. Leave specific messages and the time you called if the person you're trying to reach isn't available.
- Empty workspace of everything but the project you are working on to cut down on distractions.
- Keep an assortment of all-occasion cards and stamps in your desk.
- At the end of each project or event, organize paperwork and file.

2. Delegating: Delegation is the downward flow of formal authority - from superior to subordinate. Why are some managers not in favour of delegating responsibility? Because:

- They feel that employees can never do anything as well as they can.
- They fear that something will go wrong if someone else takes over a job.
- They lack time for long-range planning because they are bogged down in day-to-day operations.

- They sense they will be in the dark about emerging trends in the society.

The hazards of doing everything by oneself can include burnout and missed deadlines. Managers should, however, realize that effective delegation of responsibility and authority not only reduce stress on the manager's part but also improve the quality and acceptance of decisions, increase employee motivation, create sense of belonging and improve interpersonal relations with employees. Besides, delegating also teaches a manager to communicate persuasively, supervise and expand his /her sphere of influence.

Here are a few of the keys to effective delegation.

1. Delegate it if someone else can do it, wants to do it, needs to do it or likes to do it.
2. When you delegate responsibility also delegate the authority to use the resources to get it done.
3. Delegate results, not necessarily the methods.
4. When you delegate something don't take it back.
5. Ensure the person understands what and why you have delegated to them.
6. Set benchmarks or checkpoints and then leave them alone.
7. Reinforce positive results and give feedback on negative results.
8. Communicate clear instructions, expectations and guidelines.
9. Recognize and accept that it won't be done the way you would do it.
10. Use delegation as an employee development tool.
11. Resist the tendency to over inspect.
12. Put it in writing if necessary.
13. Ask for regular written or verbal reports.
14. Remember what you delegated and to whom.
15. See failure not as a negative but necessary, if people are to be willing to stretch, learn and grow.

3. Being Assertive: Being assertive involves standing up for ones personal rights and expressing ones thoughts, feelings and beliefs directly, honestly and spontaneously in ways that do not infringe the rights of others. Assertive behaviour on the part of managers means

- Starting, changing, or ending conversations
- Sharing feelings, opinions, and experiences with others
- Making requests and asking for favors
- Refusing others' requests if they are too demanding
- Questioning rules or traditions that don't make sense or don't seem fair
- Addressing problems or things that bother you
- Being firm so that your rights are respected
- Expressing positive emotions
- Expressing negative emotions

If managers want to be assertive but are concerned that others may find them too aggressive, here are some recommendations for turning aggressive behavior into assertive behavior.

- Give others a chance to speak
- Establish eye-contact with the other person
- Respect other's opinions
- Use appopriate body language
- Talk in a firm, steady voice
- Use assertive and not aggressive language
- Be clear, concise and to the point

4. Balancing work and personal time: Balancing between work and personal time is indeed a tight-rope walk. Any skew will only result in problems, like time pressures, family/work conflicts, guilt, etc. Lynne Knobloch-Fedders and Ben Gorvine,("Achieving a Balance between Work and Personal Life") suggest the following strategies that can help managers maintain a good balance between work and personal life:

Learn how to set limits - and stick to them! Setting limits (for how you will respond to demands from both your work and your personal life) will prevent you from over-committing yourself. But limits are only effective if you stick to them, so make sure you follow through on the decisions you have made about what to cut back on. As you are setting limits for yourself, it may be helpful to imagine situations in which you would be tempted to disregard your limits - and decide how you will handle these situations. That way, you won't be caught unaware into situations in which you might over-commit yourself.

Take advantage of your workplace's family-friendly policies and supports. If your workplace offers discretion over the methods, timing, or location of your work, use this flexibility to improve your situation.

Prioritize your multiple roles. When you become clearer about your priorities and values, it becomes easier to make decisions and set limits between the demands of work and personal life.

Reduce the psychological conflicts you experience between work and personal life. Surprisingly, time is not necessarily the main conflict we experience between work and personal life. Instead, the psychological conflicts (guilt, difficulty "turning off" work behaviors at home, pressure and anxiety) create the most problems. Clarifying your values, setting priorities, and actively reducing the psychological importance of one or more of your roles may be required to reduce the conflicts, and the negative emotions that arise from them.

Protect each role from interference by the others. When you are at home, turn off your cell phone, laptop, beeper, or email, so that you can be fully "present" during this time. Similarly, when you are at work, try to limit personal life intrusions - this will help you be more efficient and effective during your workday.

Develop stress-management skills. The ability to take care of yourself by doing things you enjoy - like reading, exercising, or indulging in a favorite hobby - is essential to maintaining a proper work / personal life balance. Caring for yourself in these ways will allow you to reduce your stress and reward yourself for a job well done!

- **Balance**
  - work with recreation
  - weariness with rest
  - disappointments with hope
  - sadness witth humor
  - worry with truest
  - stress with relaxation
  - doubts with optimism
  - excitement with quiet times
  - loneliness with friendship
  - rush with serenity
  - clutter with order
  - unsightly with beauty
  - fear with peace

Stress is a part of every aspect of life. Through regular practice of stress reduction techniques, symptoms of stress decrease, managers must figure out an effective way to cope with stress. They should remember that stress need not result in distress and a burn-out. If managers take cognizance of the stressors in life and workplace and strive to deal with them by stimulating the energizers – both internal and external – stress transforms into eustress for improved health and performance.

Stress Management – A Story

A lecturer was giving a lecture to his students on stress management. He raised a glass of water and asked the audience, “How heavy do you think this glass of water is?” The students’ answers ranged from 20g to 500gm.”It does not matter on the absolute weight. It depends on how long you hold it. If I hold it for a minute, it is O.K. I hold it for an hour, I will have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you will have to call an ambulance. It is the exact same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.” If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, we will not be able to carry on, the burden becoming increasingly heavier.” What you have to do is to put the glass down, rest for a while before holding it up again.” We have to put down the burden periodically, so that we can be refreshed and are able to carry on. So before you return home from work tonight, put down the burden of work. Don’t carry it back home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you are having now on your shoulders let it down for a moment if you can. Pick it up again later when you have rested…Rest and relax!

Suggested Readings

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Handbook on Problem-solving Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Knowledge • Technology • People

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Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for the personnels in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature from the academia and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive 'guides' or 'how to' booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advices and experiences prove handy in honing skills essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Problem-solving Skills,* focuses on how the personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to effectively solve problems in a variety of contexts.

1 Introduction

> "Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them." **Henry Ford**

Good problem solving skills empower managers in their professional and personal lives. Good problem solving skills seldom come naturally; they are consciously learnt and nurtured. The repertoire of good problem solving skills includes:

- developing creative and innovative solutions;
- developing practical solutions;
- showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them;
- applying a range of strategies to problem-solving;
- applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas;

What is a Problem?

1. A problem is an opportunity for improvement. "Every problem has a gift for you in its hands," says Richard Bach**.** Someone coined the word "probortunity" – an acronym combining the words "problem" and "opportunity". A probortunity is a reminder to look at problems as possible opportunities. An optimist looks at challenging or problematic events as potential opportunities for improvement. He is seen always seeking answers for the questions such as:

- Is there more than one probortunity?
- Is it my personal probortunity? Is it the organization's probortunity?
- Is it an actual probortunity or just an annoyance?
- Is this the real probortunity, or merely a symptom of a larger one?

2. A problem is the difference between the actual state and desired state. A problem could also be the result of the knowledge that there is a gap between the actual and desired or ideal state of objectives. Clarity of the problem is determined by the clarity of the knowledge of what precisely one wants and what one has. Greater clarity of the problem helps in finding a better and effective solution.

3. A problem results from the recognition of a present imperfect and the belief in the possibility of a better future. The belief that one's hopes can be achieved will give one the will to aim towards a better future. Hopes challenge one's potential, and challenge is another definition of a problem.

When confronted with problem, according to Robert Harris ("Introduction to Problem Solving"), people are likely to adopt either of the two approaches – spot it or mop it - when confronted with a problem.

1. Stop It

A stop-it approach seeks to solve a problem, so that the problem no longer exists. Its three forms are prevention, elimination, and reduction.

- **Prevent It.** Preventing a problem from occurring or recurring is the most ideal solution. The prevention approach is often a difficult one to apply because it requires predictive foresight ("this might be a problem someday if we don't act now"). For example, by preventing a cold, or an automobile accident, one can avoid the need to deal any further with a problem or its effects.
- **Eliminate It.** Eliminating a problem once and for all is also an ideal way of attacking a problem. If a tank were leaking, an elimination solution would be to plug/seal or otherwise repair the leak, the cause of the problem. To solve by eliminating should be considered in nearly every problem situation.
- **Reduce It.** The magnitude of any problem can be lessened by reducing its size. Suppose the tank is leaking and a repair (an elimination-solution) is not possible until a day or two later. The problem could be reduced by turning off

the incoming water. Without line pressure on the tank, the leak would slow down; that would be better than a full force leak.

2. Mop It

A mop-it approach focuses on the effects of a problem. Instead of treating the leak itself, the water on the floor is mopped up - the effects of the problem.

- **Treat It.** Here the damage caused by the problem is repaired or treated. The water on the floor is mopped up and the damaged floor is fixed. But, it should be noted that: (1) by itself a treat-it solution is not going to be nearly as effective as some form of stop-it solution and (2) treat-it solutions are often needed in addition to an elimination or reduction form of solution.
- **Tolerate It.** In this form of mop-it approach, the effects of the problem are put up with. In the leaky water example, one might install a drain in the floor, or waterproof the floor. The effects are taken for granted and measures are taken to endure them.
- **Redirect It.** Here the problem is deflected. Sometimes the problem will simply be redefined as not a problem. It is hard to think of a legitimate redirection for the leaking water problem, but suppose that the leak is small and the floor is not being damaged. One might say, “Well, I need the humidity; the leak is actually a good thing.” It should be remembered that a problem is a problem only when someone defines it as such.

Managers must take cognizance of the fact that problem solving is an ongoing activity. Prof. Jeff Malpas (“Problem solving for Managers”) says: “No problem is ever totally solved. Every problem has a solution, but every solution with it brings a new problem. Some well-known management techniques emphasize the idea of continuous improvement and successful problem-solving is seen as part of such continuous improvement.”

Managers should know that problem-solving is less a matter of continuous improvement as of continuous adjustment. Every solution will have unintended consequences. Every

effective system gives rise to friction and failure. Good management and effective problem-solving depend upon a willingness to adapt to the situation and recognize the ongoing and partial character of all attempts to manage or to solve.

Just ask ‘Why?’

Sometimes, as we look for approaches to creative thinking, we forget that many of the most powerful techniques are also the simplest...

Leonardo da Vinci, one of the most creative thinkers in history, says of his inspiration:

“I roamed the countryside searching for answers to things I did not understand. Why shells exist on the tops of mountains along with imprints of plants usually found in the sea. Why thunder lasts longer than that which causes it. How circles of water form around the spot which has been struck by a stone. And how a bird suspends itself in the air. Questions like these engaged my thought throughout my life”.

It is easy to forget, as we rush through our lives, that curiosity is an essential foundation for creativity.

Look around the world, keep asking ‘Why?’ and ‘Why not?’, and you will soon see new opportunities.

Source: Idea Champions

2 Causes of Poor Problem-Solving

Ineffective or poor problem-solving can be the result of any of the following factors. These factors act like blinkers, constricting the perspective of person in the process of problem-solving.

1. Bounded Rationality: Propounded by Herbert Simon, the concept of bounded rationality assumes that individuals make decisions by constructing simplified models that extract the essential features from problems without capturing all their complexity. Simon remarks that a majority of the people are only partly rational, and are in fact emotional/irrational in the remaining part of their actions. He indicates two major causes of bounded rationality:

a. Limitations of the human mind

b. The structure within which the mind operates

He states that boundedly rational people experience limits in formulating and solving problems. As a result, when calculating expected utility, people do not make the best choices.

For example, a person may choose to buy a particular brand of new cell-phone, based on the information he gathered from advertisements and friends. Constrained by bounded rationality, he will turn down even if he is offered a better bargain. Often, bounded rationality could also be caused by “inverted intelligence” - clever people who can easily argue that the information must be wrong.

2. Satisficing: Satisficing implies identifying and implementing a solution that is “good enough.” According to Herb Simon, who coined the term, the tendency to ‘satisfice’ results in solving problems which do not lead to optimal solutions. Most often, people look for solutions that had worked for them before. There may be better ways to reach the outcome, but they simply ignore them. Searching for alternative and superior solutions might entail an extra cost. The alternative solution might not prove worthy enough, if the extra costs are not justified. On the other hand, the implicit costs of

ignoring the alternative solution can be relatively greater if the chosen solution, based on prior experience, fails to deliver the expected outcome.

Michael Slote ("Satisficing Consequentialism") gives the following examples of satsificing. One involves a fairy-tale hero who, when rewarded by the gods with whatever he asks for, just asks for himself and his family to be comfortably well-off. Another involves a motel owner who gives some stranded motorists the first available room rather than the best available room.

3. Groupthink: 'Groupthink' is a term coined by psychologist Irving Janis. 'Groupthink' is a phenomenon in which the norm for consensus overrides the realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action. It describes situations in which group pressures for conformity discourage the group from critically appraising unusual, minority, or unpopular views. 'Groupthink' is a bug that strikes groups and can dramatically hinder their performance.

Some of the symptoms of 'Groupthink' are:

- **Illusion of Invulnerability**: Members ignore obvious danger, take extreme risk and are overly optimistic.
- **Collective Rationalization**: Members discredit and explain away warning contrary to group thinking.
- **Illusion of Morality**: Members believe their decisions are morally correct, ignoring the ethical consequences of their decisions.
- **Excessive Stereotyping**: The group constructs negative stereotypes of rivals outside the group.
- **Pressure for Conformity**: Members pressure any in the group who express arguments against the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments, viewing such opposition as disloyalty.

- **Self-Censorship**: Members withhold their dissenting views and counter-arguments.
- **Illusion of Unanimity**: Members perceive falsely that everyone agrees with the group's decision; silence is seen as consent.
- **Mindguards**: Some members appoint themselves to the role of protecting the group from adverse information that might threaten group complacency.

4. Groupshift: 'Groupshift' is a phenomenon in which the initial positions of individual members of a group are exaggerated toward a more extreme position. More often, however, the shift is toward greater risk. What happens in groups is that the discussion leads to a significant shift in the positions of members toward a more extreme position in the direction in which they were already leaning before the discussion. Conservatives become more cautious, and the more aggressive take on more risk.

The 'Groupshift' can be viewed as actually a special case of 'groupthink'. The decision of the group reflects the dominant decision-making norm that develops during the group's discussion. The greater occurrence of the shift toward risk can be due to any of the following reasons:

- Discussion creates familiarization among the members. As they become more comfortable with each other, they also become more bold and daring.
- People admire individuals who are willing to take risks. Group discussion motivates members to show that they are at least as willing as their peers in terms of taking risks.
- The most plausible explanation of the shift toward risk, however, seems to be that the group diffuses responsibility.
- Group decisions free any single member from accountability for the group's final choice.

5. Conformation Bias: Confirmation bias is the tendency on the part of the people to search for only the information that supports their perceived notions. Initial perceptions and ideas of people about a problem often shape the search process for information. It is important to maintain objectivity in evaluating ideas so that they are not biased toward their initial perceptions. The possible solutions include:

- Considering alternative hypotheses - view the problem from different perspectives.
- Looking for evidence to disprove their ideas - showing that a particular idea is incorrect is as important as showing an idea is correct.
- Maintain objectivity while evaluating ideas to minimize personal bias.
- Drawing conclusions based upon the evidence, not upon their personal beliefs.

6. Insufficiency of Hypotheses - Often, while solving problems, a solver seizes upon the first explanation that comes to mind and stops thinking about the problem. This difficulty is related to confirmation bias, but reflects insufficient thought applied to a problem. Many times, the immediate answer is sufficient. Other times, however, only a careful analysis of a situation beyond the immediate response is necessary to ensure a correct solution. To avoid poor problem-solving resulting from insufficiency of hypothesis, people should develop alternative ideas, rather than seizing upon the first idea as the solution. They should spend time thinking about the issues - allow time for reflection and avoid framing the problem so that only one idea emerges.

7. Fixation - Fixation is the inability to see a problem from a fresh perspective. Again, initial perceptions and structuring of a problem often determine the approaches people use to solve that problem. Structuring a problem incorrectly is a prime contributor to the inability to solve a problem correctly. To overcome fixation, people should see the problem with “fresh eyes” - allow time for reflection and incubation. They should focus on other issues, and then return to the original problem. Time away from a problem allows one to forget incorrect solutions and focus on developing new ideas.

8. Other Obstacles – Problem-solving can be impaired by biases of personal beliefs, a misunderstanding of information relevant to solving problems, and overconfidence. The solution is to study a problem objectively with all available accurate information and use objective reasoning to achieve a reasonable, sound decision. People should be sure that they understand the problem and find what constitutes a solution. They should obtain as much accurate and comprehensive information from unbiased sources possible and maintain objectivity in evaluating ideas to minimize personal bias. They should assess their decisions critically and be able to defend their ideas.

The story of the Gordian Knot

In 333BC, as Alexander the Great was leading his armies across Asia, he reached the city of Gordian in Phrygia. There he was shown the chariot of the ancient founder of the city, its pole lashed to the yoke by means of an intricate knot.

According to tradition, this knot was to be untied only by the future conqueror of Asia. Many had tried, and all had failed…

Legend has it that Alexander looked at the knot, drew his sword and sliced through the knot with a single blow. Shortly afterwards, under his rule, Asia was united for the first time.

The moral of this story: Sometimes it's better not to get too tied up in a problem. Leap for a bold solution!

Source: Idea Champions

3 Key Approaches to Problem-Solving

There are several different ways of problem-solving – all with their own advantages and disadvantages. The process an individual adopts as a manager will be influenced by organizational policies, the kind of information available about the problem and his/her own personality and communicative style. Broadly, there are three problem-solving models available to a manager.

1. Rational Problem-Solving

The brain can think in two ways - emotionally (governed by instinctive feelings) and rationally (governed by acquired knowledge and beliefs).

Emotional thinking happens in the **limbic system** - an interconnected system of brain nuclei associated with basic needs and emotions, for example, hunger, pain, pleasure, satisfaction, sex, and instinctive motivation"). When something catches one's attention, the brain, in a lightning flash, looks through all the inherited and remembered patterns to see if there is a match, and responds with the closest pattern that it can find. Emotional thinking is very clear-cut, black and white, all or nothing. For example, when a black shape on the path looks like a snake, one feels frightened and runs away.

Rational thinking, on the other hand, is a function of the part of the brain called the **neocortex** - the wrinkled outer layer of the front parts of the brain (the cerebral hemispheres), the functions of which include the perception of sensations, learning, reasoning and memory. The power to think rationally gives an individual greater flexibility of response. One has a lot more control over what one does. So that one realizes that the black shape on the path, though it looks like a snake, could also be a stick, examines it more closely before deciding what to do.

Rational problem solving rests on the following principles (R. K. Wagner - "Learning to solve practical problems"):

- Problems are identified by comparing actual performance with an expected standard performance

- Problems are deviations in actual performance from the expected standard
- A precise and complete description of the problem is needed to identify a solution:
    a) What is happening?
    b) Where is it happening?
    c) When is it happening?
    d) To what extent is it happening?
- The cause of the problem will be found by comparing problem and non-problem situations.
- Recent problems are a result of some change in the situation that has caused an unwanted deviation from expectations.

The Rational Decision-Making Model requires the following steps which, if followed, are assumed to lead to “value-maximizing choices.” The steps are as follows:

- define the problem,
- identify the decision criteria,
- weigh the criteria to determine rank of importance,
- generate possible alternative solutions,
- rate each alternative on each criteria, and
- compute the optimal decision.

The case again rational problem-solving is the flawed assumption that every problem is defined clearly and precisely, which might not be always possible. Also, rating each of the alternative problem-solutions relatively in terms of set or predetermined criteria can be a tricky task.

2. Lateral or Creative Problem-Solving

During 1950 -1960, some significant research was done by Roger Sperry, which won him the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1981. Sperry's work demonstrated that human brain is divided into two major parts or hemispheres - the right brain and the left brain.

The left brain is associated with verbal, logical, and analytical thinking. It excels in naming and categorizing things, symbolic abstraction, speech, reading, writing and arithmetic. The left brain is very linear: it places things in sequential order - first things first and then second things second, etc. Left brain engages in a very systematic, sequential and exact approach to getting the job done. The left brain strives for accuracy in the process of the job being done.

The right brain, on the other hand, functions in a non-verbal manner and excels in visual, spatial, perceptual, and intuitive information. It is associated with the realm of creativity. The right brain processes information differently than the left brain. The processing happens very quickly and the style of processing is non-linear and non-sequential. The right brain looks at the whole picture and quickly seeks to determine the spatial relationships of all the parts as they relate to the whole. This component of the brain is not concerned with things falling into patterns because of prescribed rules.

So, lateral or creative problem solving does not follow a standard set of procedures. It is a 'subconscious process based on past distilled experiences'. It is based more on the gut feeling of the manager than on an objective process of weighing alternatives. There are a set of conditions and it is accepted that under those conditions intuitive approach is generally preferred to rational approach. Intuitive method is preferred when:

- a high level of uncertainty exists,
- there is little precedence to draw on,
- variables are not reliably predictable,
- facts are limited or facts are contradictory,

- analytical data are of little use,
- there are several plausible solutions; and
- time is limited and decision must be made

The creative problem-solving is flexible. So it can be used to examine real problems and issues. According to ‘brainstorming’ creator Alex Osborn and Dr Sidney Parnes, creative problem-solving process involves six steps, which together provide a structured procedure for identifying challenges, generating ideas and implementing innovative solutions. Following are the six steps:

1. **Objective (Mess) Finding:** The problem solver discusses the situation about the problem and brainstorms a list of objectives or goals which he/she might have for him/her creative effort. Through some process, arrive at consensus on one or more objectives the group is willing to attempt.
2. **Fact Finding:** The problem-solver brainstorms all the facts which might even remotely be related to the objective. S/he has made sure that each perspective and participant is represented on the listing. S/he has to take some time for the participants to point out which facts they feel are most relevant to the objective and its eventual solution.
3. **Problem-Solving:** One of the most powerful aspects of creativity is rephrasing the problem definition to one which is both closer to the real problem and reveals more obvious solutions. One technique for this is to brainstorm different ways to state the problem. Most people recommend that the problem statement be written as: “In what ways might we…” One has to pay particular attention to changing the verbs and the nouns in the problem statement. Asking “Why?” and “How?” will also result in some interesting problem statements. Let the owner of the problem select the statement or statements which seem to best capture the “real” problem.

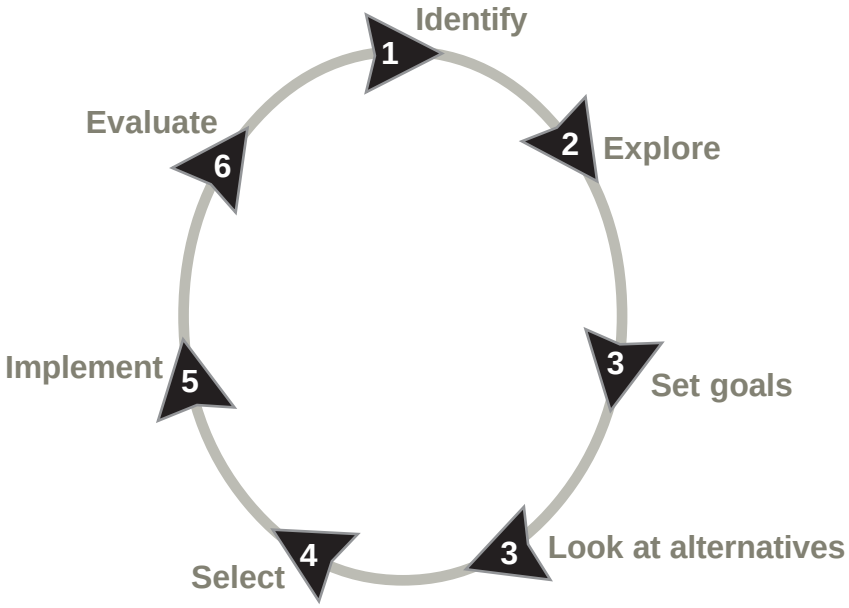
4. **Solution Finding:** In this step, the ideas with the greatest potential are evaluated and the problem owner selects an idea or set of ideas to take action on. One of the most effective methods for this step is to brainstorm the criteria which determine the best idea, like cost, appearance, etc., then select the most useful criteria. These criteria are then used in a decision matrix in which every idea is evaluated on every criterion and the judgments combined to select the idea worth putting into action.

5. **Acceptance Finding:** In this phase, the problem solvers consider the real world issues of the change from the old way to the proposed new way as well as issues that are likely to have a bearing upon the acceptance and implementation of the envisaged change. The ideas developed in this step are then integrated into the plan, increasing it's likeliness of success.

Unlike many other problem-solving methods, the process emphasizes the need to defer judgment on possible ideas and solutions until a final decision is made. In this way, the flow of ideas in the third step is not interrupted, and possible solutions, however, bizarre, are accepted.

4 Problem-Solving Process

There is a variety of problem-solving processes. But each process consists of a series of steps - identifying the problem, searching for possible solutions, selecting the most optimal solution and implementing a possible solution. It is useful to view problem solving as a cycle because, sometimes, a problem needs several attempts to solve it or the problem changes. The diagram below shows a seven-step problem solving process.



1. Identifying the Problem: The first step in the problem solving process is sizing up the situation to identify the problem. That sounds simple enough, but sometimes managers might be uncertain about what the problem is; they might just feel general anxiety or be confused about what is getting in the way of their objectives. If that is the case, they can ask themselves or their friends or a professional expert. Other useful techniques for identifying the problem include-

- Comparison with others
- Monitor for weak signals
- Comparison of current performance with objectives or past performance
- Checklists
- Brainstorming

- Listing complaints
- Role playing

2. Exploring the Problem: Having identified the problem, managers should analyze it to see what the root cause is. Often people get caught up in symptoms or effects of a problem or issue and never get down to the real cause. They get mad at someone's attitude, anger, or actions, which are not the cause of the problem. The key here is to focus on analyzing the problem for the real cause without being affected by emotional issues. Seeing answers for questions such as the following will help explore the problem:

Identify the Problem – Ask Who?

- Who says that this is a problem?
- Who caused or is causing the problem?
- Whom does it or will it affect?
- Who has done something about the problem?

Identify the Problem – Ask What?

- What happened or will happen?
- What are the symptoms?
- What are the consequences for others?
- What circumstances surround the occurrence of the problem?
- What is not functioning as desired?

Identify the Problem – Ask When?

- Did it or will it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- When did it first occur?

Identify the Problem – Ask Where?

- Where is the problem occurring?
- Did it or will it have an impact?
- Where did it have an impact?

Identify the Problem – Ask Why?

- Why is this, a problem?
- Did it or will it occur?
- Why did it occur?
- Why was nothing done to prevent the problem from occurring?
- Why did no one recognize and do something about the problem at the earliest?
- Why is a response needed now?

Identify the Problem – Ask How?

- How should the process be working?
- How are others dealing with this or similar problems?
- How do you know this is a problem; what supporting information do you have?

Once the cause is found, plans can be made to fix it. Analyzing implies gathering information. If there is not enough information, they should figure out how to research and collect it

3. Set Goals: Having explored and analyzed the problem, managers should be able to write a goal statement that focuses on what is the successful end of the process. Making and writing down a goal statement:

- helps them to clarify the direction to take in solving the problem; and
- gives them something definite to focus on

That is, what will occur as a result of the solution? This whole process is about closing or fixing the gap between the problem and the goal. Writing down the problem ensures that they are not side-tracking from, but addressing the problem.

4. Look at alternatives: Now that the problem has been analyzed, the managers can begin to develop possible solutions. This is a creative as well as practical step where every possible solution is identified. They should identify the various alternative solutions

available to them through such techniques as –

- Analysis of past solutions
- Reading
- Researching
- Thinking
- Asking Questions
- Discussing
- Viewing the problem with fresh eyes
- Brainstorming
- Sleeping on it

The idea is to collect as many alternative solutions as possible.

Mind mapping is another technique that can be used for identifying alternative solutions. Developed by Tony Buzan in the 1970's, mind mapping uses pictures and/or word phrases to organize and develop thoughts in a non-linear fashion. It helps people "see" a problem and its solution. Here's how to do mind mapping:

- Take a sheet of plain paper and turn it sideways (if using flipchart paper you don't need to turn it sideways - it is large enough); Using colored felt pens, draw a small picture (or write a phrase) in the centre of the paper representing the issue you want to solve; Draw lines out from the main problem (it helps to use different colors for each line).
- Each line should represent a different aspect of your problem or issue;
- Write down what each line represents either on top of or on the line;
- Add other lines flowing off these main lines;
- Write a word or short phrase on the smaller lines indicating what each new line represents (you may find that mind mapping works best for you if you write down the phrases or draw the images first and then connect them with the lines); and
- If you want, add images next to your main line that illustrate what each line means to you (some people think better with pictures, others with words).

5. Select the best solution: Now that there are a wide variety of possible solutions, it is time to select the best solution to fix the problem, given the circumstances, resources and other considerations. Here the managers are trying to figure out exactly what would work best given the nature of the problem. There are always a number of things that can affect a solution, for instance, money, time, people, procedures, policies, rules, and so on. All of these factors must be thought about. Managers should prioritise the solutions by their effectiveness. This is a slow process of elimination. There may be some possible suggestions that are immediately eliminated. Eventually, managers should narrow down the choices to one best possible solution which will promise the best or optimal outcomes.

6. Implementation: Implementation is a crucial part of problem-solving process. In order to implement the solution chosen, managers must have an action plan and communicate it to those directly and indirectly affected. Gemmy Allen ("Problem-Solving & Decision-Making") says that communication is most effective when it precedes action and events. In this way, events conform to plans and events happen when, and in the way, they should happen. Managers should answer the vital questions before they are asked, like –

- What should be communicated?
- What is the reason for the decision?
- Whom will it affect and how?
- What are the benefits expected for the individual, the department, and the organization?
- What adjustments will be required in terms of how work will be done?
- What, specifically, is each individual's role in implementing the decision?
- What results are expected from each individual?
- When does the action called for by the decision go into effect?

Communicating answers to these questions can overcome any resistance that otherwise might be encountered.

7. Evaluation: This is the final step in the problem-solving process. Managers should review the effectiveness of the solution against desired outcomes. Did the solution work? If not, why not? What went right, and what went wrong? What adjustments do they have to make to ensure that the solution works better? This stage requires careful analysis that improves upon the best solution.

The review of your progress can help a manager identify any problem. Steps may need to be revised or new steps added. One may need to consider a different solution, if the current one, he/she has been working with, is not helping.

Essentials of Effective Problem Solving

- **A clear description of the problem**
- **A description of the limiting (or negative) factors involved in the problem**
- **A description of the constructive (or positive) factors involved in the problem**
- **A clear delineation of the "ownership" of the problem** - Whose problem is it: mine, yours, the other guy's, my boss', my spouse's, my child's, my parents', my teacher's?
- **A clear description of the scope of the problem:** How extensive a problem is it? How long has this problem existed? How many people are affected? What else is affected by this problem?
- **A clear description of the consequences if the problem were not solved** - What is the possible impact on my family, job, life in this community, etc., if this problem isn't solved? What is the worst possible thing that could happen if this problem isn't solved?
- **A list of brainstormed solutions to the problem**, with each alternative analyzed as to its reality, its benefits, and the consequences for following each one.

- **A system of ranking each solution to finalize the decision-making process -** A rating system for analyzing each solution is developed, e.g., 100% chance of success, 75% chance of success, 50% chance of success.
- **A clear description of myself as a problem-solver -** When it comes to this problem, am I procrastinating? Am I avoiding the problem? Am I denying the problem? Am I shutting down or blocking my creativity on this problem? Am I ignoring it, hoping it will go away? Am I using magical and/or fantasy thinking in addressing the problem?
- **Determination to follow through on the solution decided upon jointly.** This involves full motivation to “take the risk” and pursue the solution to its fullest

5 Personality Types & Problem-Solving Orientations

According to Karl Jung's (Psychological Types), people are all different in fundamental ways. Their aptitude and competence to process different information is limited by their personality type. These types are eight in number, such as:

- People can be either Extroverts or Introverts, depending on the direction of their activity;
- Thinking, Feeling, Sensing, Intuitive, according to their own information pathways; and
- Judging or Perceiving, depending on the method in which they process received information.

Extroverts vs. Introverts

Extroverts are directed towards the objective world whereas Introverts are directed towards the subjective world. The most common differences between Extroverts and Introverts are shown below:

Extroverts	Introverts
• are interested in what is happening around them • are open and often talkative • compare their own opinions with the opinions of others • like action and initiative • easily make new friends or adapt to a new group • say what they think • are interested in new people • easily break unwanted relations	• are interested in their own thoughts and feelings • need to have own territory • often appear reserved, quiet and thoughtful • usually do not have many friends • have difficulties in making new contacts • like concentration and quietness • do not like unexpected visits and therefore do not make them • work well when alone

Sensing vs. Intuition

Sensing is an ability to deal with information on the basis of its physical qualities and its relation to other information. Intuition is an ability to deal with the information on the basis of its hidden potential and its possible existence. The most common differences between Sensing and Intuitive types are shown below:

Sensing types	
• see everyone and sense everything • live in the here and now • quickly adapt to any situation • like pleasures based on physical sensation • are practical and active • are realistic and self-confident	• are mostly in the past or in the future • worry about the future more than the present • are interested in everything new and unusual • do not like routine • are attracted more to the theory than the practice • often have doubts

Thinking vs. Feeling

Thinking is an ability to deal with information on the basis of its structure and its function. Feeling is an ability to deal with information on the basis of its initial energetic condition and its interactions. The most common differences between Thinking and Feeling type are shown below:

Thinking types	Feeling types
• are interested in systems, structures, patterns • expose everything to logical analysis • are relatively cold and unemotional • evaluate things by intellect and right or wrong • have difficulties talking about feelings • do not like to clear up arguments or quarrels	• are interested in people and their feelings • easily pass their own moods to others • pay great attention to love and passion • evaluate things by ethics and good or bad • can be touchy or use emotional manipulation • often give compliments to please people

Perceiving vs. Judging

Perceiving types are motivated into activity by the changes in a situation. Judging types are motivated into activity by their decisions resulting from the changes in a situation. The most common differences between Perceiving and Judging types are shown below:

Perceiving types	Judging types
• act impulsively following the situation • can start many things at once without finishing them properly • prefer to have freedom from obligations • are curious and like a fresh look at things • work productivity depends on their mood • often act without any preparation	• do not like to leave questions unanswered • plan work ahead and tend to finish it • do not like to change their decisions • have relatively stable workability • easily follow rules and discipline

Researchers like Lawrence, McCaulley and Myers have investigated the relationship of Karl Jung's theory of individuals' preferences and their approach to problem solving and decision-making. Their findings are summarized below (William G. Huitt – "Problem solving and Decision Making: Consideration of Individual Differences Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator"):

1. When solving problems, individuals who are introverts will want to take time to think and clarify their ideas before they begin talking. They will more likely be concerned with their own understanding of important concepts and ideas.

2. Individuals who are extroverts will want to talk through their ideas in order to clarify them. They will continually seek feedback from the environment about the viability of their ideas.

3. Sensing individuals will be more likely to pay attention to facts, details, and reality. They will also tend to select standard solutions that have worked in the past.

4. Persons with intuition preferences will more likely attend to the meaningfulness of the facts, the relationships among the facts, and the possibilities of future events that can be imagined from these facts. They will exhibit a tendency to develop new, original solutions rather than to use what has worked previously.

5. Individuals with a thinking preference will tend to use logic and analysis during problem-solving. They are also likely to value objectivity and be impersonal in drawing conclusions. They want solutions to make sense in terms of the facts, models, and/or principles under consideration.

6. Individuals with a feeling preference are more likely to consider values and feelings in the problem-solving process. They will tend to be subjective in their decision-making and to consider how their decisions could affect other people.

7. People, particularly, the 'judging' types, are more likely to prefer structure and organization to the problems itself and will want the problem-solving process to demonstrate closure.

8. People with a perceiving preference are more likely to prefer flexibility and adaptability. They will be more concerned that the problem solving process considers a variety of techniques and provides for unforeseen changes.

Table below lists important aspects of personality when considering attention to individual differences during problem solving. Each aspect of personality has a different orientation to problem solving, different criteria for judging the effectiveness of the process and different associated strengths.

Aspects of Personality Important for Problem-Solving

MBTI Dimension	Orientation	Criteria for Judging Effectiveness	Strengths
Extrovert	Outside world of people and things	Can "talk through" problem in group Works in "real world"	Attend to external reality Listen to others
Introvert	Inner world of ideas	Internal logic, value of ideas Want to reflect on problem	Attend to internal consistency of solutions
Sensing	Facts and details from past and present	Personal experience Practicality of solutions Conforms to standards	Attend to details What could go wrong Develop and implement specific steps of solution
Intuitive	Concepts and principles Possibilities for future	Meaningfulness of facts, details Solutions consider total situation Prospect for originality	See connections and links Develop complex solutions Implications of improper solution(s) Develop major phases
Thinking	Objectivity Logic and reason	Solutions make sense based on facts, models, and/or principles	Attend to internal and external consistencies Evaluate for efficiency and effectiveness
Feeling	Subjectivity Values and affect	Solutions consider impact on people	Evaluate for impact on people Evaluate in terms of valued by participants

Judging	Organization Structure and closure	Decisions are made Solution can be Implemented A step-by-step procedure to follow	Identify possible defects Follow steps during Implementation Evaluate for effectiveness and efficiency
Perceiving	Data gathering Processing solutions	Solutions are flexible and adaptable Enough information provided in solution Variety of alternatives considered	Develop complex solutions Flexibility

Source: William G. Huitt – “Problem solving and Decision Making: Consideration of Individual Differences Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator”

6 Personality Types & Problem-Solving Techniques

It is not enough to describe a problem-solving process and to describe how individuals differ in their approach to or use of it. It is also necessary to identify specific techniques of attending to individual differences. Fortunately, a variety of problem-solving techniques has been identified to accommodate individual preferences. Some of these techniques are oriented more to individuals who are more structured, more rational and analytical, and more goal-oriented in their approach to problem-solving.

Other techniques are more suited to individuals who demonstrate a preference for an approach that is more holistic and parallel, more emotional and intuitive, more creative, more visual, and more tactual/kinesthetic. It is important that techniques from both categories be selected and used in the problem-solving process. “

William G. Huitt (“Problem Solving and Decision Making: Consideration of Individual differences - Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator”) lists out the following **sixteen problem-solving techniques**, which focus more on logic and critical thinking, especially within the context of applying the scientific approach:

a). Means-End Analysis: In means-ends analysis, the problem solver compares the present situation with the goal, detects a difference between them, and then searches memory for actions that are likely to reduce the difference.

b). Backwards Planning: The strategy of working backwards entails starting with the end results and reversing the steps you need to get those results, in order to figure out the answer to the problem.

c). Categorizing/Classifying: It is the process of grouping objects or events together on the basis of a logical rationale. There are two kinds of categorizing, grouping and classifying. Grouping is putting together objects on the basis of a single property. Files might be grouped on the basis of “urgent” and “not-urgent”. Grouping is useful in revealing similarities and differences that otherwise might go unnoticed. Classifying

involves putting items together on the basis of more than a single property at a time.

d). Challenging Assumptions: It involves the direct confrontation of ideas, opinions, or attitudes that have previously been taken for granted. The purpose is to identify the fallacies, consistencies and inconsistencies in the problem-solving process.

e). Evaluating/Judging: It involves the comparison with a standard and making a qualitative or quantitative judgment of value or worth. Good evaluations of problem solving are generally based on multiple sources of assessment information.

f). Inductive/Deductive Reasoning: Reasoning is the systematic and logical development of rules or concepts from specific instances or the identification of cases based on a general principle or proposition using generalization and inference.

g). Thinking Aloud: It is the process of verbalizing about a problem and its solution while a partner listens in detail for errors in thinking or understanding.

h). Network Analysis: It is a systems approach to project planning and management where relationships among activities, events, resources, and timelines are developed and charted. Specific examples include Program Evaluation and Review Technique and Critical Path Method.

i). Plus-Minus-Interesting (PMI): It involves considering the positive, negative, and interesting or thought-provoking aspects of an idea or alternative using a balance sheet grid where plus and minus refer to criteria identified in the second step of the problem-solving process.

j) Task analysis: It is the consideration of skills and knowledge required to learn or perform a specific task.

Now let us take a look at Huitt's list of problem-solving techniques that conform to creative, lateral, or divergent thinking. Following is the list of problem-solving techniques;

a) Brainstorming: It is attempting to spontaneously generate as many ideas on a

subject as possible; ideas are not critiqued during the brainstorming process; participants are encouraged to form new ideas from ideas already stated.

b). Imaging/Visualization: It is producing mental pictures of the total problem or specific parts of the problem.

c). Incubation: It is putting aside the problem and doing something else to allow the mind to unconsciously consider the problem

d). Outcome Psychodrama: It is enacting a scenario of alternatives or solutions through role playing.

e). Outrageous Provocation: It is making a statement that is known to be incorrect (e.g., the brain is made of charcoal) and then considering it; used as a bridge to a new idea.

f). Overload: It is considering a large number of facts and details until the logic part of the brain becomes overwhelmed and begins looking for patterns. It can also be generated by immersion in aesthetic experiences, sensitivity training or similar experiences.

g). Random Word Technique: It is selecting a word randomly from the dictionary and juxtaposing it with problem statement, then brainstorming about possible relationships.

h). Relaxation: It is systematically relaxing all muscles while repeating a personally meaningful focus word or phrase.

i). Synthesizing: It is combining parts or elements into a new and original pattern.

j). Taking Another's Perspective: It is deliberately taking another person's point of view.

k). Value Clarification: It is using techniques such as role playing, simulations, self-analysis exercises, and structured controversy to gain a greater understanding of attitudes and beliefs that individuals hold important. The value clarification can provide a greater goal clarity and motivation and increase an internal locus of control for managers.

Following is a table summarizing the personality types, orientations and problem-solving techniques:

Personality Types and Preferred Problem-Solving Techniques

Personality Dimension	Orientation	Techniques
Extrovert	Outside world of people and things	Brainstorming Thinking aloud Outcome psychodrama
Introvert	Inner world of ideas	Brainstorming privately Incubation
Sensing	Facts and details from past and present	Share personal values, ideas facts, Overload Inductive reasoning Random word technique
Intuitive	Concepts and principles Possibilities for future	Classify, categorize, Deductive reasoning Challenge assumptions Imaging/ visualization Synthesizing
Thinking	Objectivity Logic and reason	Classify, categorize Analysis Network analysis Task analysis
Feeling	Subjectivity Values and affect	Share personal values Listen to others' values Values clarification
Judging	Organization Structure and closure	Evaluation PMI technique Backward planning Select single solution
Perceiving	Data gathering Processing solutions	Brainstorming Random word technique Outrageous provocation Taking another's perspective

Source: William G. Huitt – "Problem solving and Decision Making: Consideration of Individual Differences Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator"

How to use de Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' to improve your thinking skills

The 'Six Thinking Hats' is a quick, simple and powerful technique to improve your thinking. It does this by encouraging you to recognize what type of thinking you are using, and to apply different types of thinking to the subject.

Sounds strange? Take two minutes to expand your thinking skills…We all use different types of thinking, usually without realizing it. For example, if we are feeling pessimistic

about the situation, that is the only type of thinking we apply! This limits our ability to see all the issues.

- **The White Hat** is cold, neutral, and objective. Take time to look at the facts and figures.
- **The Red Hat** represents anger (seeing red). Take time to listen to your emotions, your intuition.
- **The Black Hat** is gloomy and negative. Take time to look at why this will fail.
- **The Yellow Hat** is sunny and positive. Take time to be hopeful and optimistic.
- **The Green Hat** is grass, fertile and growing. Take time to be creative and cultivate new ideas.
- **The Blue Hat** is the color of the sky, high above us all. Take time to look from a higher and wider perspective to see whether you are addressing the right issue.

You can also think of the hats as pairs: **White and Red, Black and Yellow and Green and Blue**

Next time you are thinking through an issue, try on de Bono's thinking hats. You'll soon find that they give you a quick, simple, and powerful technique to improve your thinking.

10 Steps for Boosting Creativity

(Jeffrey Baumgartner)

1. Listen to music by Johann Sebastian Bach. If Bach doesn't make you more creative, you should probably see your doctor - or your brain surgeon if you are also troubled by headaches, hallucinations or strange urges in the middle of the night.
2. Brainstorm. If properly carried out, brainstorming can help you not only come up with sacks full of new ideas, but can help you decide which is best.
3. Always carry a small notebook and a pen or pencil around with you. That way, if you are

struck by an idea, you can quickly note it down. Upon rereading your notes, you may discover about 90% of your ideas are daft. Don't worry, that's normal. What's important are the 10% that are brilliant.

4. If you're stuck for an idea, open a dictionary, randomly select a word and then try to formulate ideas incorporating this word. You'd be surprised how well this works. The concept is based on a simple but little known truth: freedom inhibits creativity. There are nothing like restrictions to get you thinking.

5. Define your problem. Grab a sheet of paper, electronic notebook, computer or whatever you use to make notes, and define your problem in detail. You'll probably find ideas positively spewing out once you've done this.

6. If you can't think, go for a walk. A change of atmosphere is good for you and gentle exercise helps shake up the brain cells.

7. Don't watch TV. Experiments performed by the *JPB Creative Laboratory* show that watching TV causes your brain to slowly trickle out your ears and/or nose. It's not pretty, but it happens.

8. Don't do drugs. People on drugs think they are creative. To everyone else, they seem like people on drugs.

9. Read as much as you can about everything possible. Books exercise your brain, provide inspiration and fill you with information that allows you to make creative connections easily.

10. Exercise your brain. Brains, like bodies, need exercise to keep fit. If you don't exercise your brain, it will get flabby and useless. Exercise your brain by reading a lot, talking to clever people and disagreeing with people - arguing can be a terrific way to give your brain cells a workout. But note, arguing about politics or film directors is good for you; bickering over who should clean the dishes is not.

7 Problem-Solving Tools

The following are some of the principal tools that enable managers to analyze and prioritize the root causes of identified problems and to assist in problem-solving activities. The tools outlined can also assist in identifying opportunities for improvement. The toolkit includes:

- Cause-and-effect diagram
- Pareto chart
- Flow Charts
- Histogram
- Check Sheet
- Scatter diagram
- Brain Storming

1. Cause-and-Effect Diagram

Cause and Effect relationships govern everything that happens and as such are the paths to effective problem-solving. By knowing the causes, one can find factors that are within one's control and then change or modify them to meet one's goals and objectives. By understanding the nature of the cause and effect principle, one can build a diagram that helps to solve everyday problems every time.

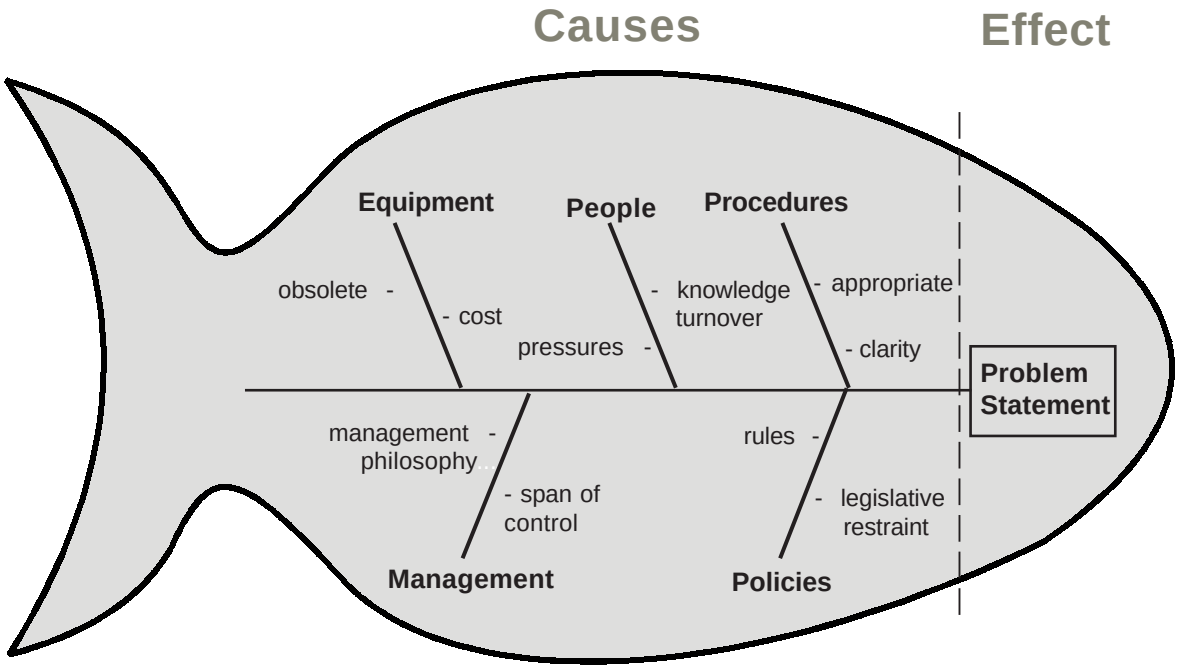
The Cause-and-Effect Diagram helps to identify all the possible factors causing a specific problem. Also known as **Ishikawa** or **Fishbone** diagram, it resembles the skeleton of a fish. The problem statement is represented as the fish's head. The purpose of the cause-and-effect diagram is to identify probable causes of the problem statement summarized in the box at the fish's head.

A straight line extends out from the fish's head, or the problem statement. Diagonal lines are then connected to the straight line, each of which represents one of the major causes of the problem. Additional lines are then added to the diagonal lines, breaking the major area down into smaller areas. More lines are added until finally, at the lowest level, individual root causes of the problem are identified.

The four steps in constructing a cause-and-effect diagram are mentioned below:

1. Determine a problem statement and categorize four or five possible causes of the problem. Major categories of causes include policies, procedures, people, equipment, work environment, measurement, management or money. Use any category that fits the situation and helps people think creatively.

2. Construct a cause-and-effect diagram. Place the problem in a box on the right side of a flip-chart page and draw a horizontal line (the fish's "spine") leftward from the box.



List two to three major causes in the categories above the horizontal line and a similar number below, connecting them with lines (the fish's "bones") to the "spine."

3. Conduct a brainstorming session to determine the specific factors the team believes to be causes of the problem in question; as these factors are identified, list them under their appropriate major category.

4. After all ideas are presented and understood, the group identifies the most likely causes (either by voting or group discussion). Causes, that are quantifiable, should be measured. This will provide a basis for prioritizing the causes.

2. Pareto Chart

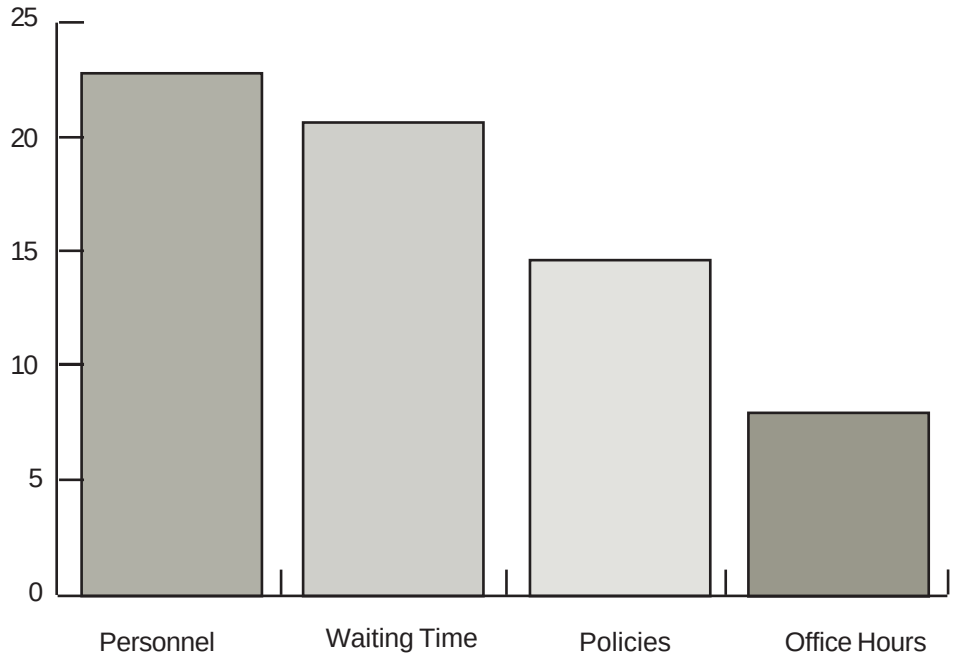
A Pareto chart (named after the 19th-century economist who devised this type of analysis) is a vertical bar graph used to determine the most serious of a group of problems, so that priorities may be set. This analysis is based on the assumption that problems have different levels of importance, and that organizations always face more problems than their time and resources can address. Pareto analysis is responsible for the famous “80/20” doctrine, a rule of thumb that holds that about 80 percent of the problems in any organization are created by 20 percent of its employees. The review can focus on the most vital problems by using a Pareto chart.

Suppose an organization is suspect to take too much time to issue permits. Then, it is necessary to identify problems causing this delay and correct the most significant ones. Studying the problem may indicate that the highest number of delays occurs because of incorrectly completed applications. Now the review can focus on improving the accuracy of applications to resolve the most significant reason for delays. This is the sort of judgment facilitated by Pareto charting.

To construct a Pareto chart:

1. Select the issues or causes to be ranked.
2. Select a measure for comparison, typically frequency (number of occurrences) or cost. If you do not have a direct measure for a cause or problem, try using a percentage.
3. List the issues or causes from left to right on the horizontal axis in order of decreasing frequency or cost.
4. Analyze the chart and choose the most significant issues for review.

Number of Complaints from January - March 1993



3. Flow Charts

Flow charts are analytical tools commonly used to identify problems. They illustrate the flow of an activity, a process or a set of interrelated decisions or communications from beginning to end.

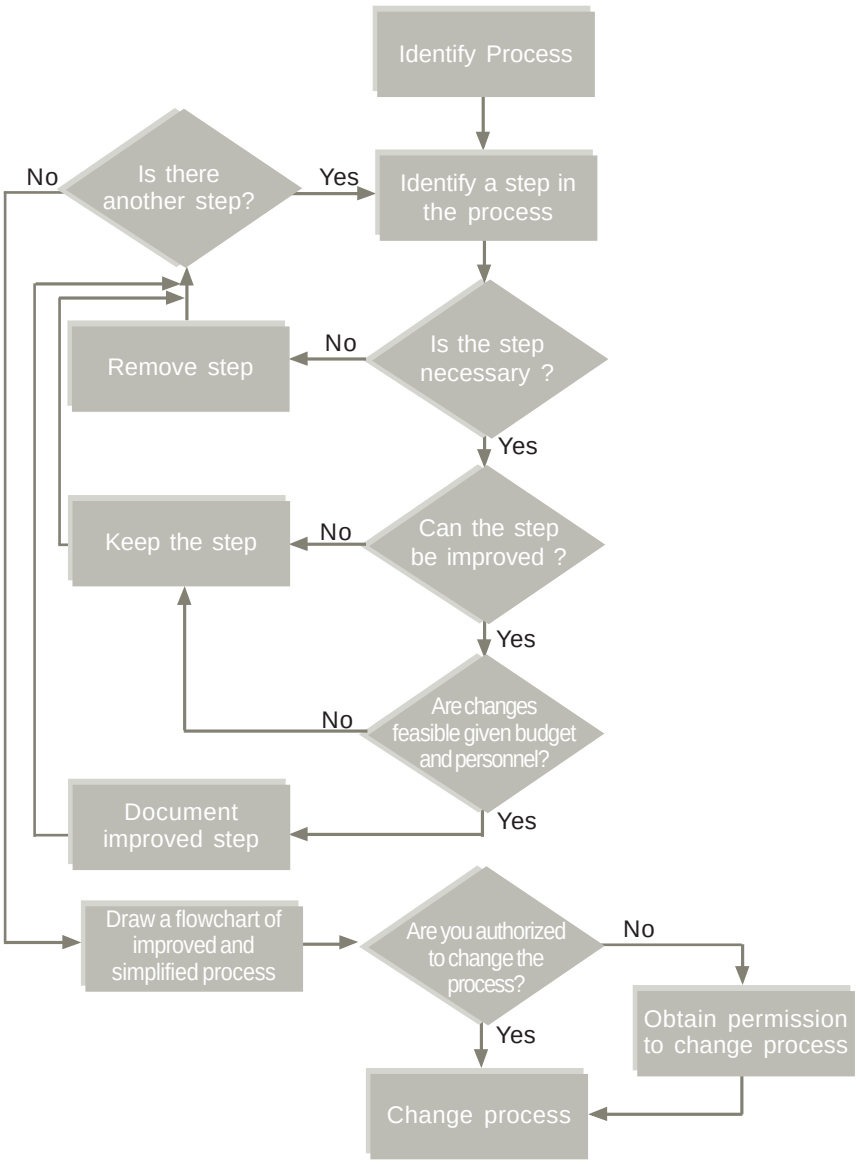
Flow charts can be applied to anything from the processing of a tax return to the flow of materials in a manufacturing process. The major benefit of flow charting is that the process forces analysts to understand all the steps of a process and to ask questions about the sequence of events in a process.

Flow charts are prepared from information gathered through interviews or observations. If an organization under review has already prepared a flow chart of an activity, verify the steps involved. Activities should be shown in sequence and significant time lapses during and between processes should be noted. It is best to use common, agreed-upon flow chart symbols so that the work will be readily recognizable to team members.

The layout of a flow chart can be either vertical or horizontal. After the chart has been drafted, its contents should be reviewed by those who provided the information involved. This review will often produce modifications to the flow chart. Once the chart's accuracy is verified, the analyst is ready to analyze the process it portrays.

In this analysis, look for duplicated activities, activities that should be performed but aren't, unnecessary activities, misuse of time and any unusual occurrences. For example, look for any obvious bottlenecks in the process, anything that interrupts the orderly and efficient use of personne resources to produce the desired end.

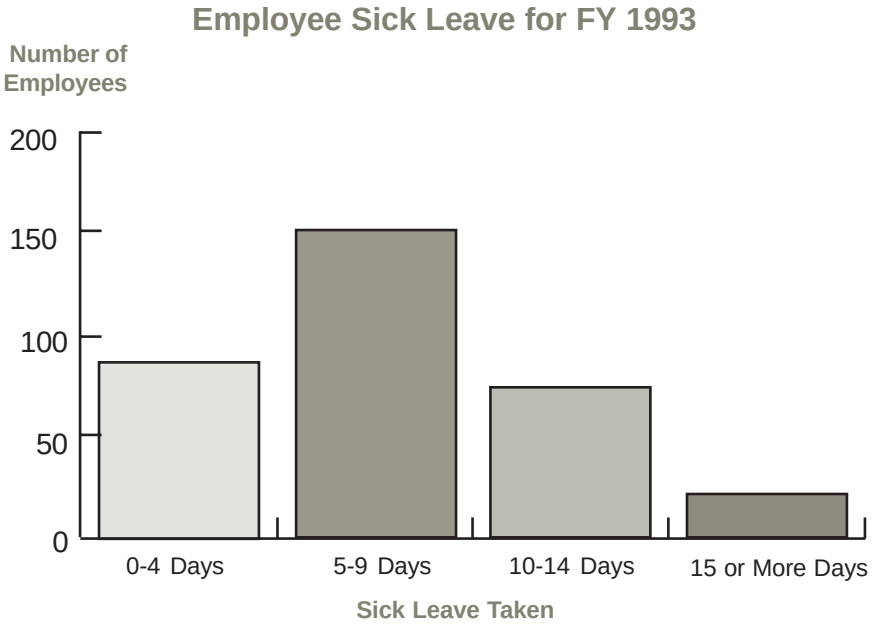
QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS FLOW CHART



4. Histograms

A histogram is a bar chart mainly used to show the frequency of certain activities. In a histogram, the horizontal axis signifies some quality being measured, while the vertical axis measures frequency. For example, an analyst could use a histogram to chart employee use of sick leave. To construct a histogram for this purpose:

1. Gather data.
2. Divide the data into manageable categories. The number of categories (the bars in the graph) will determine how much of a pattern will be visible. For example, appropriate categories might be zero to four days' leave used per year, five to nine days' leave per year, 10 to 14 days' leave per year and 15 or more sick days used per year.
3. Construct the histogram based on your data, with the vertical axis representing frequency, and in this case, the number of employees. The horizontal axis would represent the categories of leave used as established above.
4. Analyze the histogram to determine whether employee sick-leave patterns seem unusual or problematic.



6. Check Sheet

A check sheet is used to compile, summarize and track observations, interview results or other data. It can help translate opinions into facts by showing how often an event occurs or the amount of time an activity requires.

Visually, a check sheet is simply a series of rows and columns denoting activities and categories. Creating one involves the following steps:

1. Determine the activity you wish to track.
2. Design a form that is clear and easy to use, making sure that all columns are clearly labelled, with enough space to enter the data.
3. Record the data on the form in a consistent manner.
4. Analyze the data.

Check Sheet of Complaints by Field Offices

	Location of Offices			
Type of Complaints	Austin	Houston	Dallas	Total
Personnel	𝍸	𝍸	𝍸 |	24
Policies	|||	𝍸 ||	||||	15
Wating Time	||||	𝍸 |||	𝍸 ||||	21
Office Hours	||	|	|||	7
Total	16	21	28	67

Data collected from January through March of 2000

7. Scatter Diagram

The scatter diagram is another tool for determining cause-and-effect relationships. A scatter diagram charts two variables on vertical and horizontal axes to determine whether there is a relationship between them—typically, whether one variable is a cause of the other.

An example of a use for the scatter diagram could be an analysis of the relationship of overtime to processing errors among workers. To create a scatter diagram:

1. Collect the data and construct a data table. For the example cited above, the overtime hours worked and errors made over a given time period for a selected group of employees may be assembled.

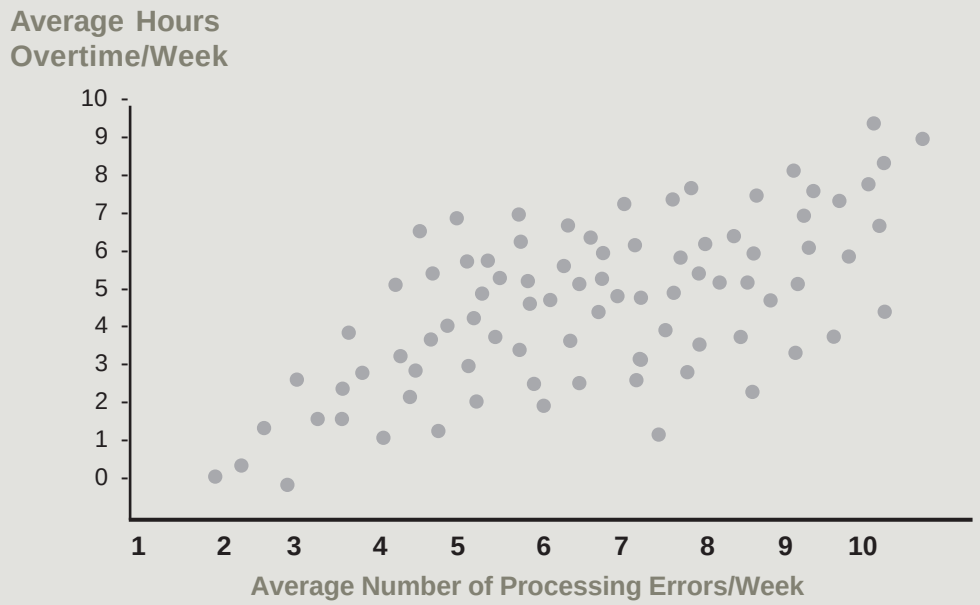
2. Draw the horizontal and vertical axes of your diagram, with values rising as the reader moves up and to the right. Place the possible “cause” variable on the horizontal axis (in this case, overtime worked) and the “effect” variable on the vertical axis (the number of errors made).

3. Plot the data on the diagram.

Interpret the diagram. A cause-effect relationship is indicated if the plotted points form a clustered pattern. The direction and tightness of this cluster determines the relationship between the two variables. The more the cluster resembles a straight line, the stronger the relationship between the variables. If the cluster rises diagonally to the right, the suspected factor appears to be a cause of the problem. If the cluster falls diagonally, the suspected cause actually appears to discourage or suppress the problem. If the data points are scattered over the whole diagram, no correlation between variables is indicated.

Exhibit 4 : Scatter diagram

Relationship of Overtime to Processing Errors



8. Brainstorming

"Brainstorming" is a technique for generating useful ideas through open, freewheeling discussion among team members. Brainstorming is intended to expand available alternatives, look beyond obvious solutions, encourage innovation, shift points of view, challenge tradition, reduce inhibitions and tap the team's creative resources.

The three basic brainstorming methods include:

i) the unstructured approach in which everyone contributes ideas spontaneously, with a designated scribe or "facilitator" recording them;

ii) a structured format, in which each team member takes a turn at presenting ideas; and

iii) a written, or “pen-and-paper” method, in which participants record their ideas on slips of paper and submit them to a facilitator or team leader.

After choosing an appropriate brainstorming method, the team leader should state a problem or discussion topic. This topic or problem should be clear and concise. Place the statement on a flip chart so everyone can refer to it and then solicit ideas from the group members.

Some tips for successful brainstorming include:

i) Never criticize or evaluate an idea when it is first presented, and record all ideas;
ii) appoint a good facilitator to ensure that everyone participates and that questions that need to be asked are actually addressed;
iii) keep the setting informal;
iv) encourage offbeat and unconventional ideas;
v) combine and build on ideas, and move quickly from one member to the next.

The brainstorming session is complete when all the participants’ ideas are recorded.

After all ideas are recorded, select the most fruitful alternatives, either by having participants vote for the best ideas or by reaching consensus through discussion. The top choices should be discussed in detail. Try listing each idea’s advantages and disadvantages.

Additional Tools of Problem-Solving

1. The APC tool For Problem-Solving

APC stands for:

- Alternatives
- Possibilities
- Choices

The three words are close in meaning, although one or more may be more appropriate in a given situation.

Doing an APC means thinking of alternatives, or different approaches then, with these multiple choices before us, we can select what seems to be the best solution.

Generating alternatives opens up possibilities. It requires special mental effort as the human brain naturally looks for patterns and certainty rather than alternatives.

That is why a thinking tool such as APC forces the mind into new directions, into actually focusing, concentrating on alternatives.

2. “The Ideal Solution Method”

In this method the alternatives are listed and then ignored. Instead, an ‘ideal solution’ is fashioned for the situation.

Once that is considered, the list of alternatives can be consulted again to see which one of them comes nearest to the ‘ideal solution’.

So the alternatives are now considered not on their own individual merit but according to how close they come to the ‘ideal’.

3. The TEC Framework

- T stands for Target
- E stands for Expand and Explore
- C stands for Contract and Conclude

This framework can be put into a time-limited 5-minute problem-solving session.

Spend 1 minute on Target and Task: The target is the precise focus of the thinking and the task is the thinking task to be performed.

Spend 2 minutes on Expand and Explore: Open up the phrase, explore the territory, pull in information and concepts.

Spend 2 minutes on Contract and Conclude: Try to make sense of when you have come to a definite conclusion or solution.

By strictly timing ourselves according to this framework the mind really focuses and produces results!

PROBLEM SOVING WORKSHEET

Problem Solving Skills Worksheet

Name : _____

Problem _____

Date _____

IDENTIFYING Circle your response to these questions	Identifying the Nature of an Open-Ended Problem and Related Information Write your thoughts and feelings here
A. Did you identify important information that might be helpful in thinking about this problem ? No Week Strong Yes Yes	List source(s) of information :
B. Did you identify different opinions about the best way to deal with this problem ? No Week Strong Yes Yes	Why are there different opinions ? In other words, what uneertuinties are there about the information related to this problem ?
FRAMING Circle your response to these questions	**RESOLVING** an Open-Ended Problem Write your thoughts and feelings here
C. Did you think about the problem beyond your first impression ? No Week Strong Yes Yes	Explain your first impression. What are some strong points or benefits of each possible solutions ?
D. Did you think about how others could look at information about this problem differently ? No Week Strong Yes Yes	Give some examples

PROBLEM SOVING WORKSHEET

Problem Solving Skills Worksheet

Name : _____

Problem _____

Date _____

RESOLVINGS Circle your response to these questions	**RESOLVING** an Open-Ended Problem Write your thoughts and feelings here
E. Can you explain how you decided what was most important in solving this problem ? No Week Yes Strong Yes	Explain
F. In coming to your solution, did you carefully consider more than one opinion or solution ? No Week Yes Strong Yes	Explain
RE-ADDRESSING Circle your response to these questions	**RE-ADDRESSING** an Open-Ended Problem Write your thoughts and feelings here
G. Have you thought about what you learned as you worked on this problem ? No Week Yes Strong Yes	What have you learned about this kind of problem ?
H. Have you considered what you need to do next related to this problem ? No Week Yes Strong Yes	What are your next steps ? What other questions do you have ?

What's Your Problem-Solving Style?

Directions: Circle the correct letter, then distribute the 11 points among choices a, b and c.

For example: a: 8, b: 2, c: 1

1. When I am faced with a complex situation or problem, I tend to:

_____ a. Ask friends

_____ b. Solve it myself

_____ c. Seek professional help

2. People who are great problem solvers:

_____ a. Have very clear goals and objectives

_____ b. Find the best solution

_____ c. Ask the right questions

3. I am happiest when I am deciding:

_____ a. How things should be

_____ b. How to make things better

_____ c. How things are now

4. When I am bothered by something I look at:

_____ a. How I would like things to be different

_____ b. What I should do to make things better

_____ c. The cause of the problem

5. When I am under pressure, I

_____ a. Spend a lot of time thinking about it

_____ b. Solve it quickly

_____ c. Sit back and carefully examine the situation

6. I am most interested in:

_____ a. The way things could be

_____ b. How to improve things

_____ c. The way things are now

8. When I am in a group, I tend to help the group:

_____ a. Determine goals

_____ b. Take action

_____ c. Obtain the facts

9. When I find out that another person does not like me or is angry with me, I:

_____ a. Try to understand what that person wants

_____ b. Try to make things better between us

_____ c. Get more information

10. When another person asks me for help with a problem, I tend to:

_____ a. Find out what the person wants to accomplish

_____ b. Give suggestions

_____ c. Get more information

11. People in general are likely to get into trouble when they:

_____ a. Lack a vision for the future

_____ b. Don’t take risks

_____ c. Act on impulse

Add the numbers you have written.

Totals:

A: _____

B: _____

C: _____

Now add 5 points to A and subtract 5 points from C.

A: _____

B: _____

C: _____

A= Idealist interested in values

B= Activist interested in proposals and ideas

C= Realist interested in information and situations

Suggested Readings

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Handbook on Persuasion Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Knowledge • Technology • People

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1.	Understanding Persuasion	
2.	Two Routes to Persuasion	
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4.	Influencing & Defense Tactics	
5.	Steps in Persuasion Process	
6.	Governing Principles of Persuasion	
7.	Overview of Persuasion Theories	
8.	Persuasion Techniques	
9.	Seven Levers of Changing People's Minds	
10.	Ten tips to effectively influence others	

Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks, developed by Centre for Good Governance, are intended primarily for personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature and current best practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive ‘guides’ or ‘how to’ booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills, essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service delivery at all levels of government.

This handbook, Persuasion Skills, focuses on how the personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to deal with stress in a variety of contexts.

1. Understanding Persuasion

> "Few are open to conviction, but the majority of men are open to persuasion"
>
> - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Smart managers know that managing by decree does not work with baby boomers and Gen-Xers, who will not tolerate the unquestioned authority of the old command-and-control environment. Work gets done by people who do not just ask: "What should I do?", but who ask: "Why should I do it?" Answering these 'why' questions requires persuasion—a conversational art worth developing.

Effective persuasion is a process which involves negotiating and learning through which a persuader leads colleagues to a problem's shared solution. It incorporates discovery, preparation and dialogue. It is about testing and revising ideas in concert with one's colleagues' concerns and needs.

The principal purpose of persuasion can be defined as being able to influence or change one's **attitudes, beliefs** or **values** towards a particular subject/object, so that these will merge and finally equal the persuader's thoughts and feelings.

- **Attitude** = A predisposition to respond to people, ideas, objects, or events in evaluative ways

Beliefs = The ways people perceive reality to be; our conceptions about what is true and what is false

Values = People's most enduring judgements about what's good and bad in life

The objective of persuasion may range from slight shifts in opinion to complete change in behavior. But, how does one determine whether one's goals are persuasive?

The goals are persuasive —

- when one seeks to influence an audience's attitudes about an issue

- when one seeks to influence an audience's beliefs or understanding about something
- when one seeks to influence an audience's behavior
- when one seeks to reinforce an audience's existing attitudes, beliefs or behaviors

Persuasion and Attitude Change

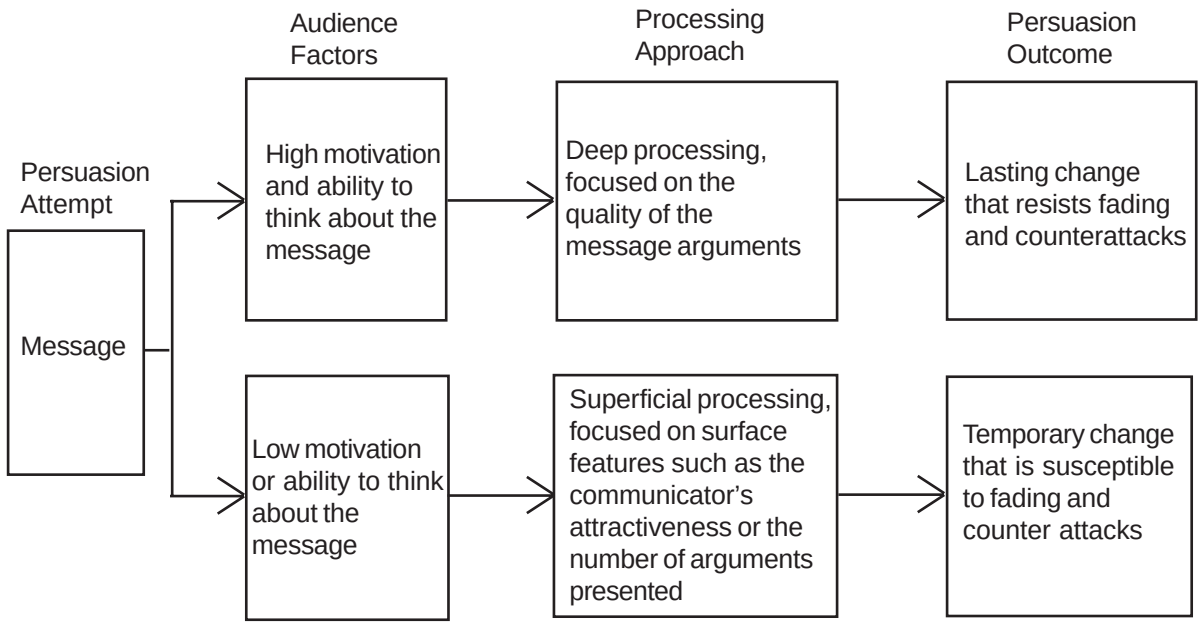
Formation and change of attitude are not two separate things - they are interwoven. People are always adopting, modifying or relinquishing attitudes to fit their ever-changing needs and interests. Acceptance of new attitudes depends on who is the communicator, how the communication is presented, how the communication is perceived by the message receiver, the credibility of the communicator, and the conditions under which the knowledge was received.

Attitudes change when:

1. A person receives new information from others or media - Cognitive change
2. Through direct experience with the attitude object - Affective change

Force a person to behave in a way different than normal - Behavioral change

DUAL ROUTES TO PERSUASION


Audience Factors
Processing Approach
Persuasion Outcome
Persuasion Attempt
Message
High motivation and ability to think about the message
Deep processing, focused on the quality of the message arguments
Lasting change that resists fading and counterattacks
Low motivation or ability to think about the message
Superficial processing, focused on surface features such as the communicator's attractiveness or the number of arguments presented
Temporary change that is susceptible to fading and counter attacks

Attitudes change, based on how a person perceives the communication and the communicator. Less committed people will change ideas more frequently. Attitude change also has to do with other personality characteristics such as susceptibility to persuasion, intelligence, readiness to accept change, etc. People are more likely to accept information if they feel the communicator has no intent to change our attitudes and opinions.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Influence

The outcomes of persuasion could be good, bad or ugly depending on the modes of tactics and contexts in which they are employed:

- Ugly influencers push and shove others into decisions. They use intimidation: “My way or no way.” Their style leaves others feeling powerless and resistant to innovation or change.
- Bad influencers might work hard to achieve legitimate and desirable goals, but lack the skills to influence effectively. “Do what I say and not what I do.” This person renders himself unbelievable, provides no model for what should or could be, and is unable to show others how change will benefit them. Their style causes people to feel they are being punished or cutting through red tape, all to please someone who appears ineffective.
- Good influencers get people to focus on an issue that is clearly and simply stated, finds out what the emotional value of the issue is to the people involved, and seeks solutions that satisfy the people who are needed to make the solution work. Their style is to “walk the talk” because what they say is congruent with what they do. Good influencers are effective because they create trust, which enables others to take risks. Their habit of communicating, informing and including others builds loyalty.

Symptoms of Hardening of the Attitudes

Anger and impatience, and challenges often mask:

- Fear
- Disappointment
- Embarrassment
- Afraid of losing: money, power, prestige, opportunity, effort, time, love

People feel personally affronted when someone:

- Ignores
- Judges
- Is sarcastic
- Lectures
- Is impatient
- Complains

People feel devalued when someone:

- Avoids accountability
- Delays action
- Over-explains
- Blames
- Uses technical language

Persuasiveness: A Self-Test

To what extent do you do the following things when you urgently want to persuade somebody of something and he/she appears resistant? (Consider your behavior both at work and in your private life.) Use the following scale:

0= never 1=sometimes 2=often or always

1. Repeat points___
2. Get louder___
3. Use more forceful language___
4. Talk at great length___
5. Become insulting___
6. Spell out the logic of your arguments___
7. Interrupt objections or explanations of the other person ___
8. Immediately argue against objections ___
9. Accuse the other person of improper motives for resisting or disagreeing ___
10. Ask loaded (rhetorical) questions (“Don’t you think…,” “Why would anybody…?” etc.)_
11. Pout, look hurt or exasperated, etc.___
12. Bring up past (related or vaguely related) incidents or non-compliance___
13. Empathize or sympathize (“I can see what you mean…,I’d feel the same if I were in your position.’’) etc. ___
14. Listen to each point or objection___
15. Speak enthusiastically, but without “railroading” or overwhelming the listener ___
16. Watch your own body language to avoid signals of aggression or wimpiness
17. Be brief in making your points and stop often to check for concurrence with your listeners ___

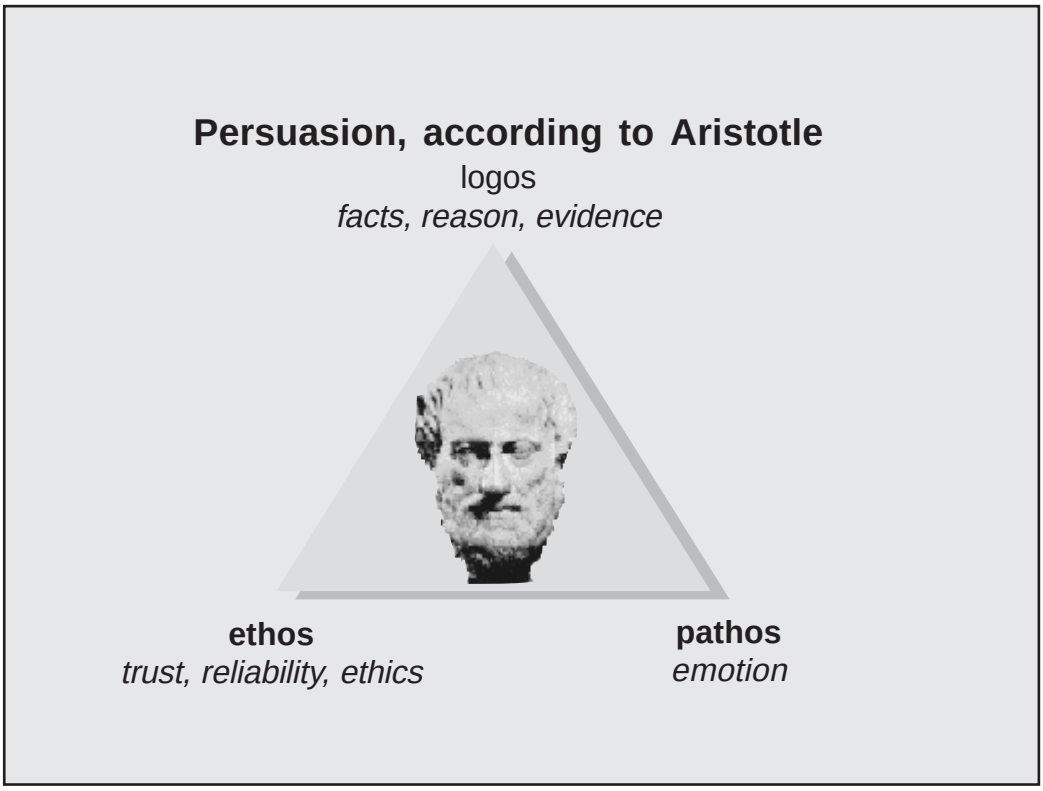
18. Watch the other person’s body language for signs of disagreement___
19. Ask focused questions aimed at:
    - unearthing all obstacles or objections, including those, the other person is trying to hold back for various reasons___
    - finding conditions under which agreement would be possible___

Evaluation: If you have many ratings of 1 or 2 for items 1-12, you’ll benefit greatly from working on your persuasion skills and attitudes. If your 1 and 2 ratings occur more in items 13-19, you have sound habits that should give you a good chance of persuading people to your point of view.

Source: All About Communication, International.

II. The Rhetoric of Persuasion

The goal of all communication is to persuade the audience. To some it comes easily, to others it is difficult to assimilate. According to the Greek Philosopher Aristotle, persuasion could be brought about by the speaker's use of three modes of "rhetoric" – **Ethos, Pathos** and **Logos**.



Ethos: Ethos (Greek for 'character') in rhetoric is the demonstration of a communicator's character and/or credentials. The persuasion lies in the power and authority of the speaker. Aristotle considered it the most important attribute of any communication. The audience has to find the writer or speaker's character credible and trustworthy — otherwise, anything said from that point will not be persuasive.

Mortimer Adler ("Art of Persuasion") draws attention to the classic illustrations of the role of ethos in persuasion in the speeches made by Brutus and Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

In *Julius Caesar,* Julius Caesar, the protagonist of the play, had been assassinated. The citizens of Rome, gathered near his dead body in the forum, grieving for their loss, angrily demand an accounting. Brutus, one of the conspirators who took part in the

assassination, mounted the rostrum to address them:

> “Romans, countrymen and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar’s, to him I say, that Brutus’ love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?
>
> As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honor for his valor; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.”

The citizens replied in unison: “None, Brutus, none.” Then, satisfied that he had persuaded them that the assassination was justified, Brutus yielded his place to Mark Antony. Before Antony can speak, the populace, completely won — or sold — by Brutus, showerered him with acclaim and proclaim the public honors they wish to bestow upon him in dead Caesar’s place. Brutus quietened them and implored them to listen to Antony, to whom he had granted permission to speak. Thus introduced, Antony addressed them:

> “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones; So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus hath told you Caesar was ambitious; If it were so, it was a grievous fault, And grievously hath Caesar answered it. Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest — For Brutus is an

honorable man; So are they all, all honorable men — Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral. He was my friend, faithful and just to me: But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honorable man. He hath brought many captives home to Rome, Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill: Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept: Ambition should be made of sterner stuff: Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honorable man. You all did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition? Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And, sure, he is an honorable man.

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, but here I am to speak what I do know. You all did love him once, not without cause: What cause withholds you then to mourn for him? O judgement! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason. Bear with me; my heart is in the coffin there with Caesar And I must pause till it come back to me."

The short speech of Brutus mainly illustrates the role of *ethos,* as does the somewhat longer opening portion of Antony's address. Practical persuasion is always selling and compelling — whether it is in the market place or in the political forum, across the counter or in a legislative chamber, in a commercial transaction or in a campaign for public office, in the advertisement of a product or in an appeal for a public cause or a political candidate.

Pathos: Pathos (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience') is an appeal based on emotion. The intent is to motivate people to take action. Without effective use of pathos, persuasion is unlikely to move people to action on any issue. Many rhetoricians, over the centuries, have considered pathos the strongest of the appeals, though this view of persuasion is rarely mentioned without a lament about the power of emotion to sway the mind.

Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the communicator are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the audience. Thus, pathos refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message on an audience. It is the power with which the communicator's message moves the audience to decision or action.

Rhetoric of pathos "makes its appearance fairly early in Antony's speech. Antony reminds people of all the things that Caesar did for Rome, things from which they benefited, and as he recounts these benefactions, he repeatedly asks them whether they can believe that Caesar displayed self-seeking ambition rather than dedication to the public good."

In fact, extensive use of pathos-driven speeches have been made by teachers, managers, and political leaders. Tim Bryce ("Art of Persuasion") quotes Franklin Roosevelt's "fireside chats" which gave moral strength to the American public during the Great Depression and World War II as an example.

However, the only problem with the rhetoric of pathos is that that it is not necessarily based on truth. Bryce illustrates the presence of falsity in pathos by citing the example of Adolph Hitler who was able to motivate the German people to develop a military state. Hitler's discourse was often laced with lies. Also, advertising often substitutes facade for substance and as such, the public should exercise "caveat emptor" (let the buyer beware). Apart from this, pathos is a great way to get one's point across.

Logos: Logos, or appeal through reasoning, was considered the most important appeal by Aristotle. It refers to the internal consistency of the message—the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. The impact of logos on an audience is sometimes called the argument's logical appeal. Basically, a logos-based argument exhibits geometric characteristics, such as:

- If A = B
- And B=C
- Then A=C

However, Tim Bryce warns that the danger with rhetoric of logos is “developing a weak or convoluted argument which is perceived as either illogical or is difficult for the audience to grasp.” For example:

- Idolizers are people.
- Indians are people.
- Therefore, all Indians are idolizers.

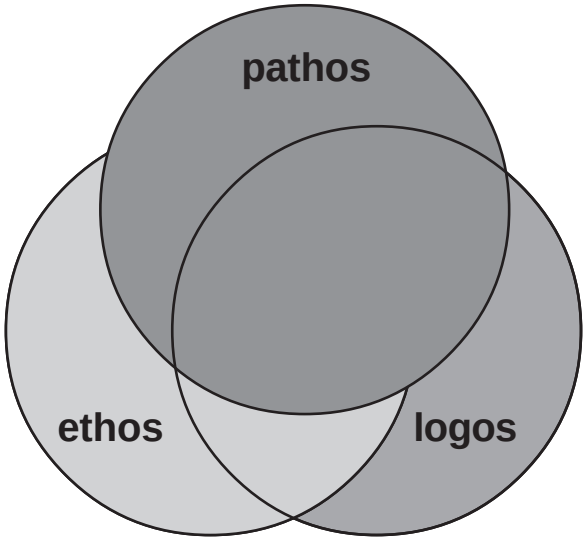
Logos is vital to the credibility of one’s argument which should be carefully constructed with basic building blocks of common sense. So logical discourse is an effective way of communicating thoughts, but it is important to know the audience before presenting such ideas.

Adler says: “Reasons and arguments may be used to reinforce the drive of the passions, but reasons and arguments will have no force at all unless your listeners are already disposed emotionally to move in the direction that your reasons and arguments try to justify.” The concluding portion of Antony’s address is an illustration of effective blending of pathos and logos.

> “If you have tears, prepare to shed them now. You all do know this mantle: I remember The first time ever Caesar put it on; ‘Twas on a summer’s evening, in his tent, That day he overcame the Nervii: Look, in this place ran Cassius’ dagger through: Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb’d; And as he pluck’d his cursed steel away, Mark how the blood of Caesar follow’d it, As rushing out of doors, to be resolved If Brutus so unkindly knock’d or no; For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel: Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
>
> This was the most unkindest cut of all; For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, Ingratitude, more strong than traitors’ arms, Quite vanquish’d him: then burst his mighty heart; And, in his mantle muffling up his face, Even at the base

> of Pompey's statue, Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell. O, what a fall was there, my countrymen! Then I, and you, and all of us fell down, Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us."

Seldom will anyone depend on any component of rhetoric – ethos, pathos or logos. Separating the appeals is an artificial process. The three appeals work together in persuasion as illustrated in the diagram below:



This diagram represents a way of imagining how the three appeals can add to each other. However, just as using a single appeal is unlikely to persuade, neither is using all three in equal measure. How much *ethos*, *pathos* or *logos* is added into the mix depends on the speaker, the audience, the subject and the context.

III. Functions of & Routes to Persuasion

Functions of Persuasion

The function or purpose of persuasion will depend on how strongly the audience holds an attitude. In relation to the persuader's opinion, audience may have attitudes that fall anywhere on a continuum as below.

-2 ————- -1 ————- 0 **————-** +**1 ———— +2**

-2 = strongly opposed, -**1 =** moderately opposed **0** = neutral or undecided **+1 =** moderately in favor, +**2 =** strongly in favor

The persuader needs to select a purpose that is realistic for his/her audience. **Five** general purposes of persuasion are listed below.

- **Create uncertainty**. When an audience is strongly opposed to the persuader's view, the best that may be possible for the persuader is to make the audience a little less certain they are right, a little less comfortable with their current attitude.
- **Reduce resistance**. If the audience is moderately opposed to the persuader's position but not closed-minded, the persuader may be able to reduce opposition to his/her view and move the audience toward neutrality. While not expecting a reversal of views this goal asks the audience to recognize the validity of opinions different from their own.
- **Change attitude**. If the audience is not committed, especially strongly, to any attitude on the topic this goal is appropriate.
- **Amplify attitude**. If the audience is already moderately favorable to the persuader's view, he/she can design a message which will reinforce current attitudes in the audience, help the audience resist appeals from opponents, and (perhaps) motivate the members of the audience to become strongly committed to his/her position.

- **Gain behavior**. When an audience strongly favors the persuader's position, the logical goal is to get them to act on their convictions.

Two Routes to Persuasion

There are two routes leading to persuasion: Central Route and Peripherial Route.

1. Central Route occurs when the attitude of an audience is changed because of thoughtful consideration of the message. The central route to persuasion is sought when the receiver has high-involvement information processing—whether the person ponders the content and logic of message. It involves a more logical, thought-out process and generates a number of cognitive responses to the communication. It leads to more enduring attitudinal change.

- If the argument is compelling à persuasion à accept job
- If not compelling à persuasion won't occur à stay with the job you have

2. Peripheral Route involves persuasion via incidental cues — e.g. speaker's attractiveness, expertise, pictures, sounds, etc. It tends to appeal to emotions rather than cognitions. It triggers temporary liking or acceptance and works best for audiences who are neither analytical nor involved with the issue. The peripheral route to persuasion is used when the receiver has low-involvement information processing — persuasion depends on non-message factors; for example, if the message-receiver thinks: "That speech has a lot of statistics in it, so I have positive feelings about the message."

Whether the person uses the central or peripheral route depends on a large variety of factors. Here, five factors have been mentioned:

a. An individual receiving the message (viewing/hearing the message) must be able to understand the message to use the central route. Comprehension of the message would include being familiar with all of the terms used in the message (for example, high tech terminology), being able to learn new concepts that are presented, and be-

ing able to relate experiences and knowledge gathered in the past to the new information being presented.

b. Another factor that affects the central route to persuasion is the personality of the audience member. Is the person willing to think about the message in detail? Some people enjoy engaging in complex cognitive activities, and other people are less willing or able to contemplate the message. And, is the information presented relevant enough to the people that they would engage in critical thinking?

For example, a person who does not wear contact lenses is not likely to waste his or her time thinking thoroughly about a message for contact lens solution and a person who does not want a new car might not think deeply about the merits of a new model of car.

c. The peripheral route is affected by whether or not the message falls into a person's latitude of acceptance or rejection (whether or not the person has already made up his or her mind on the subject).

For example, a public service message advocating a pro-choice view on the use of ultrasonography method primarily for determing the position and health of a foetus rather than sex-determination which leads to abortion of female fetuses/ or the Act that was passed in Goa regarding the HIVtest compulsorily to be taken by the bride and the bridegroom before marriage would not create an attitude shift; it also would not create a change in the views of the individual who already agrees with the pro-choice position. If message receivers are stable in their conceptions, they will not need to analyze the new messages thoroughly.

d. Other factors that can influence peripheral processing of an audience are basic cues, such as food or pain, in the message. For example, an individual with a headache might see an ad for Anacin (Zandu balm), and just go buy it without critically evaluating the message content. Message-recipients are also peripherally affected by the source of the message. Is the speaker attractive? Is the speaker credible?

e. In situations in which an audience uses the peripheral route in attitude change, it may not matter whether or not any actual information is provided.

Now having analysed the factors that leads one to take a central or peripheral route, let us find the “tactics” that are adopted in the process. And the following chapter unfolds the “tactics” and its complexities in detail.

IV. Persuasion

(Influencing & Defense Tactics)

A. Influencing Tactics

The following is Marwell & Schmitt's Taxonomy of 16 influence or persuasive tactics that people employ to change beliefs, attitudes or behaviors of people who they interact with.

1. **Reward**
    a. I'll reward you if you do it. "I'll throw in a pair of speakers if you buy it today." "Thanks! I'll make certain your manager knows how helpful you were."
2. **Punishment**
    a. I'll punish you if you don't do it. "If you don't buy it today, I won't be able to offer you this special incentive price again." "If I can't get it at that price tomorrow, then I'll take my business elsewhere."
3. **Positive Expertise**
    a. Speaking as an authority on the subject, I can tell you that rewards will occur if you do X, because of the nature of reality. "If you start working out at our gym regularly, you'll find that people are more attracted to you physically."
4. **Negative Expertise**
    a. Speaking as an authority on the subject, "I can tell you that punishments will occur if you do Y, because of the nature of reality". "If you don't buy it today, you may never get another chance - our stock is almost sold out."
5. **Liking, Ingratiation**
    a. To get the prospect into a good frame of mind, "Gosh you look nice today. I just love that hat you're wearing! Should we order dessert before we look over the contracts?"

6. **Gifting, Pre-giving**
    a. It means giving something as a gift, before requesting for compliance. The idea is that the target will feel the need to reciprocate later. “Here’s a little something we thought you’d like. Now about those contracts . . .”

7. **Debt**
    a. Recalling past favors like, “After all I’ve done for you! Come on—*this* time it’s *me* who needs the favor.”

8. **Aversive Stimulation**
    a. Continuous punishment and the cessation of punishment are contingent on compliance. “I’m going to play my classical music at full volume if you insist on playing your rock music at full volume. When you turn yours down, I’ll turn mine down.”

9. **Moral Appeal**
    a. This tactic entails finding common moral ground, and then using the moral commitments of a person to obtain compliance. “You believe that women should get equal pay for equal work, don’t you? You don’t believe that men are better than women, do you? Then you ought to sign this petition! It’s the right thing to do.”

10. **Positive Self-feeling**
    a. You’ll feel better if you X. “If you join our club today, you’ll feel better about yourself because you’ll know that you’re improving every day.”

11. **Negative Self-feeling**
    a. You’ll feel bad if you Y. “If you don’t return it to him and apologize, you’ll find it hard to live with yourself.”

12. **Positive Altercasting**
    a. Good people do X. “Smart people tend to sign up for the year in advance, because that’s how they can get the best weekly rate.”

13. Negative Altercasting

a. Only a bad person would do Y. “You’re not like those bad sports that whine and complain when they lose a game.”

14. Altruism

a. Do me a favor or “do-me-a-favor”. “I really need this photocopied right away, can you help me out?” (An extremely common influence tactic and is in wide use among friends and acquaintances).

15. Positive Esteem of Others

a. Other people will think more highly of you if you X. “People respect a man who drives a Mercedes.”

16. Negative Esteem of Others

a. Other people will think worse of you if you Y. “You don’t want people thinking that you’re a drug-head loser, do you?”

B. Defence/ Resistance Tactics

Resistance to persuasion refers to the processes through which people prevent persuasive messages from changing their attitudes. They include cognitive, motivational as well as affective factors. Listed below are some of the defense tactics:

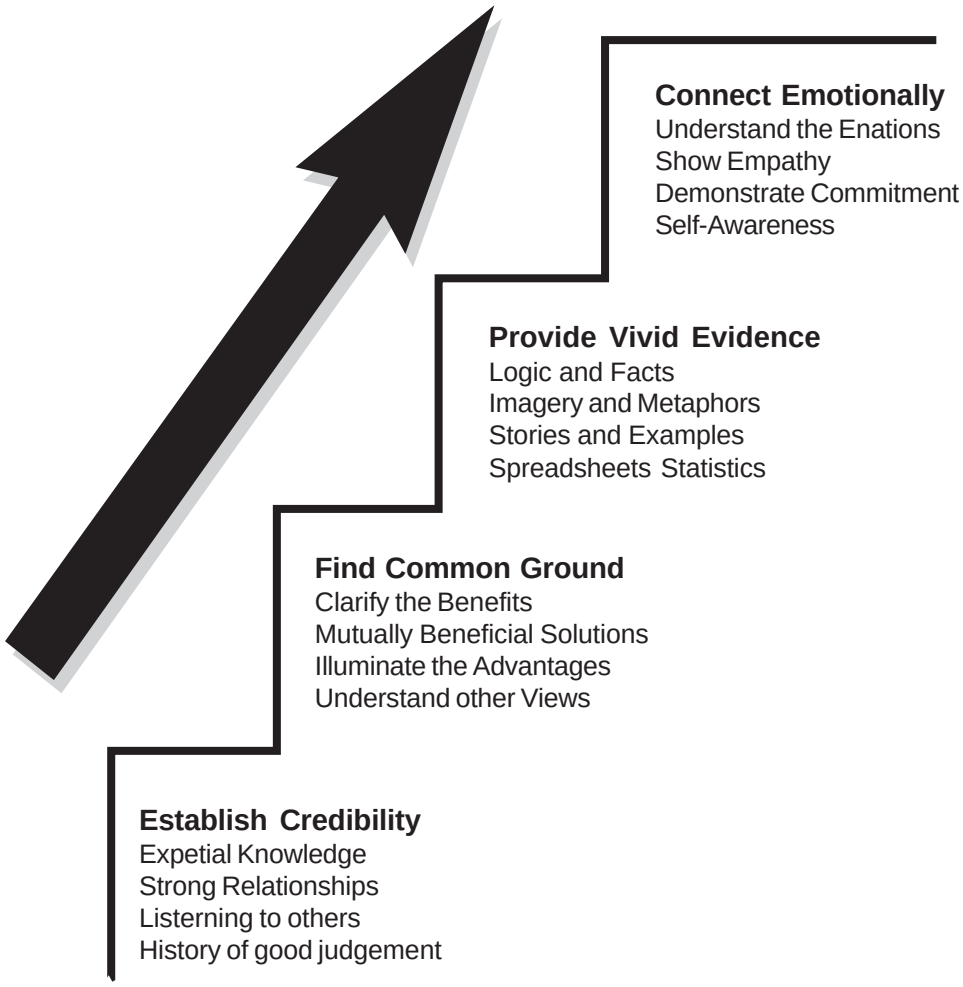
- **Deflect** - they could divert the issue to a lesser, side issue; or could “pass the buck” to a lower official who has no real power.
- **Delay** - your opponent could make you think they are addressing the issue, when nothing is really being done, for example, forming a “study commission” that has no real power.
- **Deny** - your opponent may say your claims and your proposed solutions, or both, are invalid.
- **Discount** - your opponent may try to minimize the importance of the problem or question your legitimacy as an agent of change.

- **Deceive** - your opponent may deliberately try to make you and your group feel like, they are taking meaningful action, when they in fact have not; they may never have had any real intention to consider your issues.
- **Divide** - your opponent may sow the seeds of dissent into your group's ranks, and use a "Divide and conquer" strategy.
- **Dulcify** - your opponent may try to appease or pacify your group through offers of jobs, services and other benefits.
- **Discredit** - your opponent may try to cast doubt on your group's motives and methods.
- **Destroy** - your opponents may try to de-stabilize or eliminate your group through legal, economic, or scare tactics.
- **Deal** - your opponent may decide to avoid conflict by offering a deal, working towards a mutually acceptable solution.

Surrender - the opposition may agree to your demands. If this is the case, you should remember that the victory is not complete until the opposition follows through with its promises.

V. Steps in Persuasion Process

Persuasion is an essential proficiency for all leaders. According to Professor Jay Conger, “effective persuasion involves four distinct and essential steps.” These are identified in the following diagram



1. Establish credibility - Credibility grows out of expertise and relationships. A persuader needs strong emotional characteristics and integrity. The need to listen carefully to other people’s suggestions and establish an environment in which they know their opinions are valued. They should prepare by collecting data and information that both support and contradict their arguments through – surveys, focus groups, interviews, sounding boards with colleagues/experts and personal hunches.

Credibility factors - Expertise

• Well informed

• Studies issues thoroughly

• Clearheaded/reasonable in beliefs

• Provides reasons/evidence in response to objections

• Avoids foolish/exaggerated opinions

• Is own person/not easily misled

• Has specialized training/experience

• **Credibility Factors: Relationship**

• What's said matches what's done

• Truthful/admits mistakes

• Acts out of conviction, not expediency/opportunism

• Concerned for others rather than self

· Emotionally stable

• Not intimidating, domineering, submissive, lacking conviction

• Has emotional/personal stake, not "just business"

2. Framing common goal with colleagues- Effective persuader must be adept at describing the position in terms that illuminate the person's point advantages that he/she is trying to persuade. It is a process of identifying shared benefits. This requires conversations to collect essential information by asking thoughtful questions. This process will often prompt to alter the initial argument or include compromises.

Peter Sandman identifies four kinds of colleagues or public with varying levels of 'involvement' with a persuader's issue of interest that managers should learn to cope:

- **Fanatics:** Persuader's issue is their main interest aside from job and family. They can not turn their interests.
- **Browsers:** Persuader's issue is on their 'worry list', but way at the bottom.
- **Attentive:** Persuader's issue is on his/her top-10 list.
- **Inattentive:** They do not know and they do not want to know.

3. Reinforce positions with vivid language and compelling evidence: Persuasion requires presentation of evidence — strong data in multiple forms (stories, graphs, images, metaphors and examples). Persuaders need to make positions come alive by using vivid language that complements graphics.

In most cases, a rock-solid argument:

- Is logical and consistent with facts and experience
- Favorably addresses your audience's interests
- Eliminates or neutralizes competing alternatives
- Recognizes and deals with office politics
- Receives endorsements from objective, authoritative third parties

4. Connecting emotionally with audiences: Good persuaders are aware of primacy of emotions and are responsive to them. They know how to maintain a balance between professionalism and their own emotional commitment to the position they are advocating. Their connection to their audience demonstrates both intellectual and emotional commitment to their position. Successful persuaders cultivate an accurate sense of their audience's emotional state, and they adjust their arguments accordingly. Whatever their position, they must match their emotional fervour to their audience's ability to receive their message.

Proven Approaches for Strengthening Emotional Connection

- Go for the heart of the audience
- Use highly descriptive and involving stories and illustrations
- Use visuals to illustrate your points
- Show how the issue has touched you personally

The persuasion process is after all governed by principles that are dealt with in the next chapter and following is a chart summarizing the persuasion process.

Persuasion Process

Establish Credibility

Expertise/Knowledge

Strong Relationships

Listening to others

History of good judgment

Find Common Ground

Clarify the Benefits

Mutually Beneficial Solutions

Illuminate the Advantages

Understand Other Views

Provide Vivid Evidence

Logic and Facts

Imagery and Metaphors

Stories and Examples

Spreadsheets/Statistics

Connect Emotionally

Understand the Emotions

Show Empathy

Demonstrate Commitment

Self-Awareness

VI. Governing Principles of Persuasion

An important attribute of management is the ability to persuade others to accept ideas and follow certain courses of action. Where senior managers give directions, intermediaries may be required to influence the behavior, thought process and actions of others in order to comply with that direction. A manager's level of success or failure may be determined by his/her ability to influence people within his/her own organization, as well as those operating in other organizations.

The six principles of influence that are used everywhere in society are discussed by Dr. Robert Cialdini. While these are common principles that can be effective, ethical, and lasting, they can also be used unethically, as by those leading totalist groups. Compliance is behaviour that occurs only because it is requested, that is, getting what one asks for. **The Six Principles** of **Reciprocity** are:

1. **Reciprocity (give and take)**

    a. **Obligation** People are programmed from childhood to pay back those who give them something. If someone gives a present for their birthday, they have to give that person a gift for his birthday. If someone sends a Christmas card, people feel that they must send them one. Those who only take are called moochers, ingrates, parasites.

    For example, the Hare Krishna Societies are mostly funded by contributions. They give something like a book or flower, and then ask for money. People buy their way out of the obligation. Some try to give back the flower, or throw it on the ground in order to break freeb. **Reciprocation of concessions**

    A person will start by asking for something very high, and then come down. Compliance is very high in this situation.

2. **Scarcity (if I can't have it, I want it)**

Something held in abundance is much less highly valued than something is scarce. Deceptive groups use this, for example, by saying that this is the only way to salvation.

To a slightly less degree this is also done when the group claims to be the “best,” the “closest to the will of God,” “God’s Green Berets,” the “fastest path to enlightenment,” etc.

a. **Exclusivity of information**

Exclusive information is more prized, and more readily believed. A test of scarcity showed that scarcity of commodities produced increased revenue, but the exclusivity of the information about a future shortage produced a far greater increase in revenue. It should be noted that the information must be true to maintain the relationship of trust.

b. **Rivalry for scarce items**

Scarcity can be manipulated, especially by creating rivalry for it. In cults this can apply to such things as leadership positions, praise from the leader and other special favors.

3. **AUTHORITY (if an expert says it, it must be true)**

People automatically believe the expert or follow those in authority. This is true even if the person is not and cannot be an authority, but is only perceived as such. They react automatically, without thinking, because an “authority” says so. The most credible authorities are both knowledgeable and trustworthya. **TRUST**

One must be impartial, unbiased and honest. A shortcut to gaining trust is to say something mildly contradictory to one’s own position. Then one will be seen as impartial, willing to acknowledge the negative side of one’s own position, and one will thus establish credibility.

b. **MISPLACED TRUST**

Trust can be established either by “smuggling” or by being honest and providing the truth.

4. **CONSISTENCY (I can't back out now, nor do I need to)**

a. **Obtain a commitment**

People become more certain after they invest in something—or make a decision.

b. **Start small and build**

Start by getting a person to make a very small commitment, and then ask for increasingly larger requests. The build-up can be slow, subtle and insidious. Once the commitment is made, it is very hard to change.

5. **CONSENSUS (everyone is doing it)**

a. **The actions of many others**

People often look to see what other people are doing before they act. In Singapore, a bus strike caused a run on a bank and its closure because the people outside the bank waiting for the bus created the impression of a problem with the bank.

b. **The actions of similar others**

"The more one sees others like him/her doing something, the more one does what he/she does"

c. **Rejection of Original Referent Group**

If the original referent group is rejected, a person is susceptible to the coercion and persuasion of the new group. This is one of techniques used by cults: reject normal society, parents, and friends and substitute the cult.

6. **LIKING (positive connections create liking)**

a. **Similarities**

A person likes people who are like himself/herself.

b. **Compliments, praise**

People like to be complimented by others, whether the compliment is true or false.

c. **Cooperative efforts**

Bonds form through cooperative efforts, whether natural and legitimate or unnatural and manipulative.

These principles will be seen in any influence-setting situation. It is crucial to take a psychological step back, away from the situation to ask oneself, “Why do I feel this obligation to say yes to this person’s request [or to believe what this person is telling me]?” Is a person just feeling obligated towards the other because the other person gave him something; or because he or she seems to be an “authority”; or because the person claims to have exclusive truth. Is it because he or she is “a nice person”; or because all his friends signed up; or because one is already agreed to an earlier request? Are these reasons, by themselves, sufficient to warrant a person going ahead and saying yes? One has to make sure that there are legitimate reasons for going forward.

According to Cialdini, when it comes to utilizing the principles of persuasion, there are three different categories under which people fall - Bunglers, Smugglers, and Sleuths.

The **“Bungler”** is the individual who doesn’t understand how to use the most powerful principles of influence and, consequently, fumbles away opportunities for beneficial change.

The **“Smuggler”** is the person who understands these principles of influence perfectly well, but who imports them illicitly into situations where they don’t naturally exist, thereby producing gain that is one-sided and temporary.

The **“Sleuth”** on the other hand, uncovers the power principles that naturally reside in the influence situation and brings them to the surface to the long-term advantage of both parties

Cialdini says, it is only through the Sleuth's approach that an influence agent or persuader can bring about the desired change in others that is both effective and ethical.

The Bungler

Doesn't know the principles

Fumbles away opportunities

The Smuggler

Knows the principles but misuses them

Causes loss through dishonesty

The Sleuth

Knows and looks for natural principles at work

Alerts the other party

Informs him or her into "yes"

Four Ways to Not to Persuade

1. **Don't attempt an up-front hard sell.** Providing a strong position at the start of a persuasion effort gives potential opponents something to fight against. One should present one's position with finesse.

2. **Don't see compromise as surrender.** People want to see the persuader is flexible enough to respond to their concerns. Compromises can often lead to better, more sustainable shared solutions.

3. **Don't think the secret to persuasion lies in presenting great arguments.** Arguments, per se, are only one part of the equation. Other factors that make arguments compelling are the persuader's credibility, her ability to create a mutually beneficial frame for a position, connect to the right emotional level with an audience, and communicate through vivid language.

4. **Don't assume persuasion is a one-shot effort.** Persuasion involves listening, testing a position, reframing it in a way that reflects input from the group, re-testing, reframing incorporating compromises and trying again.

Jay Conger

VI. Overview of Persuasion Theories

Persuasion is a complex phenomenon involving interplay of different factors and is influenced by diverse communication modes and contexts. There are several theories, advocated by communication experts, based on extensive research and experience which attempt to provide insights into the whole process of persuasion. Presented below is an overview of some of the principal theories of persuasion.

1. Social Judgement Theory: This theory of persuasion holds that to persuade someone best, one must understand well his or her present views on the subject. There are five principles of social judgment theory:

- People have categories of judgment by which they evaluate persuasive positions.
- When people receive persuasive information, they locate it within their categories of judgment.
- The level of ego involvement affects the size of latitudes. (The latitude of acceptance is the range of opinions with which people agree. The latitude of rejection is the range of opinions with which people disagree. The latitude of non-committal is measured by the questions for which people have no opinion.) For example, ego involvement increases the latitude of rejection. When closely involved with an issue, people recognize a broader range of opinions on the issue with which they disagree.
- People tend to distort incoming information to fit their categories of judgment.
- Small to moderate discrepancies between anchor positions and the one advocated will cause people to change; large discrepancies will not. People typically can not be moved far from their anchor position or far outside their areas of acceptance or rejection. Ambiguous messages thus work best.

According to this theory, influence is most likely to occur under certain conditions. Communicators must work within the latitude of acceptance or at least the latitude of

non-commitment for success. People will neither process nor respond in a negative way to information that occurs within their latitude of rejection. Therefore, direct attacks are doomed to failure according to this theory.

2. Inoculation Theory: Inoculation theory posits that through cognitive processing, the likelihood of resistance to attitude change can be enhanced by applying inoculation treatments containing threat components that motivate individuals to generate counter arguments. The motivation for individuals' counter arguing is induced by threats to their freedom of attitudinal discretion.

Inoculation works because it exposes people to arguments, making them think about and rehearse opposing arguments. When they hear the arguments again, even stronger versions, they pay less attention to them, especially if they believe their opposing argument is stronger.

There are **three stages** to inoculation:

- Warning: Tell the person that it is about to happen so they are forced to get ready.
- Weak attack: Attack them, but weakly so they can easily resist.
- Active defending: The persons must actively defend themselves (and find it relatively easy to do so).

Inoculation theory has explanatory power in that it provides credible explanations for the concepts. This theory has predictive power, and has relative simplicity. Inoculation theory is testable and can therefore be proved false, and is internally consistent.

3. Balance Theory: Balance theory states that when tensions arise between or inside people, they attempt to reduce these tensions through self-persuasion or trying to persuade others. A 'motivational theory' of attitude change, 'Balance Theory' conceptualizes the consistency motive as a drive toward psychological balance. It proposes that "sentiment" or liking relationships are balanced if the 'affect valence' in a system multiplies out to a positive result.

For example: a person who likes another person will be balanced by the same valence attitude on behalf of the other.

Symbolically, when P (+) > O and P < (+) O the result is psychological balance.

This can be extended to objects (X) as well, thus introducing triadic relationships.

If a person P likes object X but dislikes other person O, what does P feel upon learning that O created X? This is symbolized as such:

- P (+) > X
- P (-) > O
- O (+) > X

Multiplying the signs shows that the person will perceive imbalance (a negative multiplicative product) in this relationship, and will be motivated to correct the imbalance somehow. The person can either· Decide that O isn't so bad after all,

- Decide that X isn't as great as originally thought to be, or
- Conclude that O couldn't really have made X.

Any of these will result in psychological balance, thus resolving the dilemma and satisfying the drive. (Person P could also avoid object X and other person O entirely, lessening the stress created by psychological imbalance.)

4. Source Credibility Theory: The source credibility theory postulates that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible. The theory is broken down into three models that can be used to apply the theory. These three models are: the factor model, the functional model, and the constructivist model.

The factor model - a covering laws? approach - helps determine to what extent the receiver judges the source as credible.

The functional model - a covering laws approach - views credibility as the degree to which a source satisfies a receiver's individual needs.

The constructivist model - a human action approach - analyzes what the receiver does with the source's proposal.

The findings of the Source Credibility of Persuasive Communication study by Yale University are presented schematically below:

Who (source of communication):

- The speaker should be credible and attractive to the audience.

Says what (how)(nature of communication):

- Messages should not appear to be designed to persuade.
- Present two-sided arguments (refuting the 'wrong' argument, of course).
- If two people are speaking one after the other, it is best to go first (primacy effect).
- If two people are speaking with a delay between them, it is best to go last (recency effect).

To whom (the nature of the audience)

- Distract them during the persuasion
- Lower intelligence and moderate self-esteem helps.
- The best age range is 18-25.

While the relationship between source credibility and attitudinal change seems to be self evident, it is interesting to note that many studies have also revealed no/ and relatively low level of relationship between source credibility and attitudinal change.

5. Cognitive Dissonance: The cognitive dissonance theory gives a basic explanation for the way humans react when they act outside of their beliefs. This theory posits that individuals often have conflicting beliefs with actions they take, or other beliefs they have. This dissonance creates a tension and tension reduction is automatically sought

by changing their evaluations by some degree. Dissonance increases due to the following:

- The importance of the subject
- How strongly the dissonant thoughts conflict
- People's inability to rationalize and explain away the conflict

Dissonance increases with the importance and impact of the decision, along with the difficulty of reversing it. Discomfort about making the wrong choice of car is bigger than when choosing a lamp.

Dissonance is often strong when people believe something about themselves, but do something against that belief. If they believe that they are good but do something bad, the discomfort they feel as a result is cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance is central to many forms of persuasion to change beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors. The tension can be injected suddenly or allowed to build up over time. People can be moved in many small jumps or one large one.

Cognitive dissonance is a very powerful motivator which will often lead to change one or other of the conflicting beliefs or actions. To release the tension a person can take one of three actions:

- Change his/her behavior.
- Justify his/her behavior by changing the conflicting cognition.
- Justify his/her behavior by adding new cognitions.

Dissonance is most powerful when it is about our self-image. Feelings of foolishness, immorality and so on (including internal projections during decision-making) are dissonance in action.

If an action has been completed and cannot be undone, then the after-the-fact dissonance compels one to change one's beliefs. If beliefs are moved, then the dissonance appears during decision-making, forcing one to take actions one would not have taken before.

Cognitive dissonance appears in virtually all evaluations and decisions and is the central mechanism by which a person experiences new differences in the world. When one sees other people behave differently to one's images of them, when one holds any conflicting thoughts, one experiences dissonance.

6. Reinforcement Theory: Attitude changes result from an opinion change produced through reinforcement in areas such as attention, comprehension and acceptance. Attention, comprehension and acceptance are considered by the audience before a new opinion is adopted. The message must be drawing attention and easily understood. More importantly, it must be presented in a way that reinforces the idea's validity.

Here is an example of how reinforcement theory operates. A public relations practitioner is conducting a week-long campaign for "Organ Donation Awareness Week". S/he conducts a pre-campaign phone survey providing positive reinforcement for pro-organ donation answers for two groups and no reinforcement for the other two groups. All groups have an opposing position to organ donation.

One group from each, reinforcement and no reinforcement, are in the target area of the campaign. According to Reinforcement Theory, the people in the areas that received the reinforcement and the campaign will have the greatest change in attitude toward organ donation. The next should be the group that received the reinforcement without the campaign closely followed by those who received the campaign but not the reinforcement. The group with the least amount of attitudinal change would be those who reached no reinforcement and did not receive the campaign.

7. Information Manipulation Theory: A communicator overtly or covertly violates one of the conversational maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner with the intention of deceiving his/her audience.

- 'Quantity' refers to a person's expectations that a conversation will be as informative as possible. We do not expect information to be left out.
- 'Quality' refers to a person's expectation of being presented with information that is truthful and complete.

- ‘Relation’ illustrates the expectation of contributing relevant information to a conversation.
- ‘Manner’ relates to how things are said rather than what is said.

For example, the private secretary turns up late to the office. How will he/she answer his boss for turning up late?

- Quantity: “I am so sorry Sir; I was caught up in a traffic jam caused by political rally.”
- Quality: “I overslept. Because, I had forgotten to pay the electric bill, power got cut off and my alarm clock didn’t go off.” “
- Relation: “I’ve just had a really bad week. My mom was in the hospital and was discharged today morning only.”
- Manner: (said rolling eyes and looking disgusted): “I really started on time, but was caught up in the traffic jam”

Information Manipulation Theory provides an explanation for and the multiple ways in which deception can occur. However, it does not predict what maxims a person may only violate that the violation will occur within the certain realm of possibilities provided.

8. Rank’s Model: Rank’s model of persuasion states that persuaders use two major strategies to achieve their goals. These strategies are nicely set into two main schemes known as (1) **intensify,** and (2) **downplay**.

The basic premise of the model is that people will either intensify or downplay certain aspects of their own product, candidate, or ideology, or those of their receiver’s. The persuaders will do this in one of four methods.

- Intensify their strong points.
- Intensify the weak points of the opposition.
- Downplay their weak points.
- Downplay the strong points of the opposition.

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VIII. Persuasion Techniques

One cannot be an effective manager if one fails to influence others – especially the colleagues and subordinates. Scott Williams ("Leader Letters") says: "…building power bases should not be a manager's primary focus, but managers have to have at least some form of power to be able to do their jobs. The same principle applies to influence (which is the exercise of power); influencing others does not prove that a manager is effective, but failure to influence others is often the cause of managerial ineffectiveness."

Choosing the right influence strategy is the key to managing effectively. Scott Williams advocates the three following techniques of persuasion and the choice of the specific techniques by managers depend on their values, priorities and contextual demands.

1. Reason

When feasible, the best way to influence others is by reason. Managers who primarily use reason to influence others garner more respect and support in their organizations. Using reason to influence others simply means explaining to them why it is important or helpful for them to do what they are being asked to do and relying on their sense of responsibility and conscientiousness to comply. It's possible/appropriate to use reason when the relationship with the other party is one of mutual trust and respect, and there is sufficient time to explain the request. Reason also requires some degree of common values and priorities between the parties. If someone is requested to do something because it would "save the organization's money" or "make the client happy," that person will only be motivated to comply with the request to the extent that he/she cares about those outcomes.

- **Using Reason**

  - Again, reason is the best form of influence for most situations. When presenting the reasons why someone is asked to comply with a request or accept a suggestion, managers should consider how their request or suggestion pertains to the personal values of the person they are trying to

influence. In the ideal situation, the person they are trying to influence has internalized the organization's values. If so, anything they ask him/her to do that is consistent with the organization's values will be something he/she personally wants to do.

- **Resisting Reason**

  - **Present alternative reasoning**. When someone is trying to use reason to get us to do something, people are likely to respond in one of two ways: (1) cooperate because the reasoning is sound, or (2) tactfully explain why they do not think it would be wise for them to cooperate. In other words, reason can be resisted with counter-reasoning. People may need to call attention to the bigger picture or the flaw in the logic.

  - **Defend your rights**. Some people become slaves to their desire to be helpful to others. Being cooperative and a "team player" is great, but they should remember that they have rights. They should not sacrifice their priorities in order to help others. They have a right not to help others who are becoming overly dependent on their help. They have a right to use this free time to pursue innovative projects. They have a right to work a reasonable number of hours. Sometimes, they have to assertively stand up for their rights. In pop-psych terms, "people pleasers" need to develop "boundaries."

  - **Firmly refuse**. Sometimes people are a little overzealous in their efforts to use reason to influence us. They have ideas to "sell" to us. And, like all good salespeople, those zealots do not give up when we voice our objections - they try to answer them. As long as they continue to present counter-reasoning, the debate will continue. Even in relationships that they would like to keep harmonious, sometimes they need to firmly refuse a request and firmly refuse to discuss it further.

2. Exchange

Exchange influence techniques include all the ways to get people to do things by engaging in some sort of trade. Putting an incentive on a certain goal and offering a bonus for a particular assignment are examples of exchange techniques. Ingratiation is a more subtle and potentially manipulative way to use an exchange to influence others. Ingratiation is giving gifts or performing favours to foster a sense of indebtedness in another party. Later, when that party is wanted to do something again, that sense of indebtedness can either consciously or unconsciously influence their decision.

Exchange works even when the party managers are trying to influence does not have the same values and priorities that they do. Exchange techniques answer the “What’s in it for me?” question. Of course, the problem is that managers have to give something to the other party, such as some form of reward or incentive. Furthermore, once they start using incentives to get compliance, people will expect them to offer them inducements when they try to influence them in the future. A drawback specific to the ingratiation strategy is that it can actually cause the opposite of the intended effect if the plan becomes obvious, because people resent being manipulated.

- **Using Exchange**
    - **Favors or incentives** - To overtly influence others with exchange, managers must clearly explain exactly what they have to offer and what they want to receive in return. Any ambiguity in the offer or request could cause the other party to feel cheated later. It can also help to emphasize “it’s a one time offer” so that the party they are trying to influence will not always expect them to dangle a carrot in front of them when they want their help.

Ingratiation - To influence others using ingratiation, managers have to be subtle. Overt attempts at ingratiating themselves with others often backfire because people resent being manipulated. They can ingratiate themselves with others by spontaneously doing

favours for them or giving them gifts. Even friendship and compliments can be offered for the purpose of ingratiation. Colloquial terms for this are “brown nosing” and “sucking up.”

- **Resisting Exchange**
    - **Scrutinize gifts and favors**. Managers should consider the motives of people who give them gifts and do favours for them. Not that gifts and favors are always manipulative, but they should decline gifts from people who may be using them to bias their decision-making.
    - **Reject manipulative bargaining tactics**. When managers notice that a party they are bargaining with is using manipulative tactics such as rushing them into an agreement or trying to change terms they have already agreed upon, they should call attention to the manipulation, explain why they do not want to bargain that way, and suggest a different approach to bargaining.
    - **Stop bargaining**. If managers do not approve of someone’s bargaining style, they can refuse to bargain with him or her. Unless they are willing to walk away from negotiations, the other party has no leverage over them.

3. Pressure

Pressure influence techniques involve coercion or intimidation. People comply with these techniques to avoid the negative consequences of not doing so. Sometimes those negative consequences are clearly stated (i.e., coercion), other times they’re implied (i.e., intimidation). Some examples of the range of negative consequences that managers could use include - quitting and leaving someone in a bind, shouting at someone, requiring overtime, or embarrassing them publicly. The advantage of pressure is that it can get quick compliance, but that is about all that can be said in defense of pressure. Pressure tends to create insecurity, resentment, and distrust. It should be used as a last resort.

- **Using Pressure**

    - To use pressure effectively, managers must use it sparingly. Furthermore, they must stay within organizational policies and the bounds of what is reasonable. For instance, it is reasonable to threaten to suspend a staff member who repeatedly violates office norms, but unreasonable to threaten to terminate someone the first time he or she misses a meeting. Finally, they have to follow through with the consequences if they do not gain compliance. If they do not deliver the consequences, they will have less credibility when using coercion in the future.

- **Resisting Pressure**

    - **Build the power base**. In the famous words of British historian, Lord Acton, "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely." Perhaps he exaggerated, but most of the managers have been in situations where people who have had a lot of power over them have treated them in insensitive and selfish ways. By building their own power base, they reduce the chances of a powerful person pressuring them.

In summary, reason, exchange, and pressure are used to influence others in organizations. Whenever managers can use the reason strategy to influence others, they probably should. Exchange can also be effective, and it is particularly useful when parties have different values and priorities. Pressure can be effective too, but it should be practiced with utmost care.

There are also the Cognitive Dissonance Techniques that managers could use for persuasion. Cognitive dissonance is based on two assumptions:

- Contradictions are uncomfortable.
- Because they're uncomfortable, contradictions motivate change.

The Cognitive Dissonance Techniques include:

- **“ben franklin effect” -** enemies who do you one favor will want to do more
- **hazing -** get people to like their situation by making them suffer to get there
- **counterattitudinal advocacy -** when we state opinions we don’t believe, we start to believe them
- **labeling -** get people to act a certain way by talking to them as if they already were that way

1. Ben Franklin Effect

The “Ben Franklin Effect” is a great example of cognitive dissonance theory at work. Ben’s political opponent originally had antagonistic views toward Ben. However, Ben then very politely asked him for a small favor. For whatever reason — perhaps the refinement of Ben’s letter or the smallness of Ben’s favor — the opponent obliged. After obliging, the opponent feels cognitive dissonance. Ben is his enemy, and yet, he just did his enemy a favor. He just contradicted himself. Logical contradictions are discomforting. How can he get rid of this contradiction? There are two ways:

1. take back book (change behavior so it aligns with original attitudes about Ben)
2. decide Ben is actually good (change attitudes about Ben so they align with new behavior)

It follows that it is very easy to change one’s attitude to relieve dissonance, but very difficult to change one’s behavior. Thus, the political opponent becomes Ben’s friend, and in fact, is even more willing to do more favors for Ben, to further relieve any evidence of contradiction between his thoughts and his actions.

In essence, “Ben Franklin Effect” is converting an enemy into a friend, by asking ones enemy for a small favor. If the enemy obliges, he or she will be even more willing to do more favors.

2 Hazing Technique

Hazing is getting people to like their situation by making them suffer to get there. Approval of a situation is greatly amplified if people have spent lots of effort to reach that situation. Sometimes an effortful path can be purposely planned in the interest of manipulating attitude.

The following are some examples of hazing divided into three categories: subtle, harassment, and violent. It is impossible to list all possible hazing behaviors because many are context-specific. While this is not an all-inclusive list, it provides some common examples of hazing traditions.

A. Subtle Hazing: It, “subtle hazing”, is termed so, because these types of hazing are often taken-for-granted or accepted as “harmless” or meaningless. Subtle hazing typically involves activities or attitudes that breach reasonable standards of mutual respect and place people on the receiving end of ridicule, embarrassment, and/or humiliation tactics.

Some Examples:

- Deception
- Assigning demerits
- Silence periods with implied threats for violation
- Deprivation of privileges granted to other members
- Requiring new members/rookies to perform duties not assigned to other members
- Socially isolating new members/rookies
- Name calling
- Expecting certain items to always be in one’s possession

B. Harassment Hazing: Behaviours that can cause emotional anguish or physical discomfort in order to feel like part of the group are called harassment hazing. Harassment hazing confuses, frustrates, and causes undue stress for people.

Some Examples:

- Verbal abuse
- Threats or implied threats
- Sleep deprivation
- Be expected to harass others

Obviously, hazing is a negative persuasion tactic and is least preferred by those people-oriented managers who believe in good interpersonal relationships

3 Labelling

Labelling is getting people to act a certain way by talking to them as if they already were that way. Labelling could be interpreted as a self-fulfilling prophecy effect. The difference is that with labelling, one is consciously constructing artificial expectations of a person. However, that person does not know it is artificial, so it's all the same to him or her.

This strategy involves assigning a trait, attitude, belief, or other label to a target individual and then making a request of that individual that is consistent with that label. In an effective demonstration of this strategy, researchers Alice Tybout and Richard Yelch (1980) showed how the labeling technique could be used to increase the likelihood that individuals would vote on Election Day. They interviewed a large number of prospective voters, and randomly told half of them that based on their responses, they could be characterized as "above-average citizens likely to vote and participate in political events." The other half of the interviewees were informed that they could be characterized as about average in terms of these interests, beliefs, and behaviors. Those respondents given the label as being a good citizen and as having a high likelihood of voting not only came to see themselves as better citizens than those labeled as average, but they also were more likely to vote in an election held one week later.

One can use this technique in the organizational settings in several ways. For example, if a colleague or subordinate seems to be having difficulty with a project and is losing confidence in himself or herself, a manager can remind that person how intelligent and hardworking and persevering he or she is, and can even point out examples of past behaviors reflective of these traits.

One must remember that as tempting as it might be to move over to the Dark Side with this strategy, this technique, like all other influence strategies, should be used only ethically –that is, only when the trait, attitude, belief, or other label accurately reflects the target individual's disposition. Of course one would not even think of using this strategy in an unethical manner.

Assertion

An assertion is an enthusiastic or energetic statement presented as a fact, although it is not necessarily true. They often imply that the statement requires no explanation or back up, but that it should merely be accepted without question. Any time a manager states that his opinion is the best without providing evidence for this, he or she is using an assertion. The other person, ideally, should simply agree to the statement without searching for additional information or reasoning.

The following are other additional persuasion techniques one is likely to encounter in organizational settings:

Card Stacking

It involves only presenting information that is positive to an idea or proposal and omitting information contrary to it. Card stacking is used in almost all forms of persuasion, and is extremely effective in convincing the public. Although the majority of information presented by the card stacking approach is true, it is dangerous because it omits important information. The best way to deal with card stacking is to get more information.

Pinpointing the Enemy

This is an attempt to simplify a complex situation by presenting one specific group or person as the enemy. Although there may be other factors involved, the subject is urged to simply view the situation in terms of clear-cut right and wrong.

Plain Folks

The plain folks device is an attempt to convince the public that his/her views reflect those of the common person and that they are also working for the benefit of the common person. The persuader will often attempt to use the accent of a specific audience as well as using specific idioms or jokes. Also, the persuader, especially during speeches, may attempt to increase the illusion through imperfect pronunciation, stuttering, and a more limited vocabulary. Errors such as these help add to the impression of sincerity and spontaneity.

Simplification (Stereotyping)

Simplification is similar to pinpointing the enemy, in that it often reduces a complex situation to a clear-cut choice involving good and evil. This technique is often useful in swaying uneducated audiences. When faced with simplification, it is often useful to examine other factors and pieces of the proposal or idea.

Transfer

It is an attempt to make a person view another item, to link the two in his/her mind. Although this technique is often used to transfer negative feelings from one object to another, it can also be used in positive ways. By linking an item to something the person respects or enjoys, positive feelings can be generated for it. However, in organizations, transfer is most often used to transfer blame or bad feelings

IX. Seven Levers to Change People's Minds

- What does it take to change one's mind?
- How do we change our minds?
- What happens when we change our minds?

Howard Gardner ("Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People's Minds") says the first step toward changing a person's mind is no surprise: "Know thine audience." The tactics managers use to influence their senior colleagues should be different from those he/she uses to persuade a large group of employees. Age is another factor to consider. Gardner says, "As you age, the neural networks become like a road that has been driven down over and over again. There are deep ruts."

Beliefs also become deeply ingrained and reinforced over time; the longer people believe something, the better they get at deflecting counterarguments.

Gardner has identified seven factors—he calls them levers—that are effective in influencing a person to change his mind:

1. **Reason:** Reasoning involves logical outlining the pros and cons of a decision.
    - The use of reason figures heavily in matters of belief
    - Especially useful for educated people
    - Uses rational approach in identifying and weighing relevant factors
    - Often involves sheer logic, use of analogies etc.,
    - Pareto's 80/20 principle holds relevance (According to Pareto Principle one can in general accomplish most (perhaps up to 80%) with a relatively modest amount of effort (perhaps up 20%)
2. **Research:** It involves presenting data and relevant cases to support the argument.

- Useful especially for educated people with scientific temperament
- Can proceed in systematic manner – even with statistics – to verify trends
- 80/20 principle will guide behavior and thought

3. **Resonance:** It involves using ones likeability and emotional appeal to win support for ones argument.
    - A view, idea or perspective resonates if it feels right.
    - Resonance appeals to the affective component of the human brain – not cognitive component
    - Fit occurs at the subconscious level, and may conflict with reason
    - Fit occurs if one feels ‘relation’ to the mind changer (i.e., ‘reliable’, ‘respects’ etc.)
    - 80/20 fully applies here
4. **Representational Re-descriptions:** It is making a point in many different ways - using humour, stories and pictures; acting out a scenario.
    - A change of mind becomes convincing if it lends itself to representation in different forms
    - Especially true, if forms reinforce each other
    - 80/20 principle is less applicable here
5. **Resources and Rewards:** It is one using rewards or punishments as incentives to convince someone to adopt his/her viewpoint
    - Mind changing is more likely to occur when considerable resources can be drawn on
    - The provision of resources is an instance of positive reinforcement
    - 80/20 principle is fully applicable here

6. **Real World Events:** Using events from the society to make one's point
    - A major event, like, September 11 terrorists' attack on twin-towers in US, tsunami or earthquake may drastically change one's mind.
    - Events would push people towards adopting the 80/20 principle from a conventional 50/50 principle
7. **Resistance:** People have a tendency to develop strong views that are resistant and revert to 50/50 principle
    - One has to understand the factors that cause people to reject a particular point of view. Such insights can make it easier for one to change his/her mindset.

Some levers will work better than others will in government or public service organizations. A manager who relies strictly on his charm to "resonate" with his audience may not get very far. But the use of stories (representational re-description) can be very effective. Managers have to make sure that the stories that they communicate are inclusive rather than built around scare tactics. "Try to incorporate everyone in the same narrative and convince people that we are in this together," says Gardner.

The biggest challenge managers are likely to run up against is fundamentalism—not in the religious sense, but in the form of a conscious decision made by a person not to change his mind. When they encounter people whose opinions are so fixed and unwavering, Gardner advises managers not to waste their time trying to change them. Gardner notes that he has had a long string of assistants who would leave their desk drawers open despite his frequent warnings about pocketbook safety. "Every now and then I would steal their wallets just to show them," he says, "but eventually I got too old." Plus, he says, it never worked anyway.

X Ten Tips to Effectively Influence Others

1) Set an outcome for what the other person will do, if you are successful in influencing him/her.

a) Flush out in detail what would really be ideal for you - even if you think there's no way that ideal is possible. At a minimum you'll know your own goals, and you are likely to get closer to them than you think.

b) Consider the other person's outcome(s). Are there ways you can include their goals in your proposal? What are the benefits and costs to him/her in doing what you want? Are there ways to enhance his/her benefits and/or lessen his/her costs that could still get you what you want?

2) Aim high when you make the first suggestion(s). Suggesting that he/she does even more than you might really want gives you room to lessen your suggestions, and makes it more likely you'll get closer to what you really want in the final agreement.

3) Be congruent, and confident as you communicate. Other people usually notice (not always consciously) your body language and voice tone, so if you're uncertain in making suggestions, it's likely that will come across.

In other words, be as certain of yourself and your suggestions as you can possibly be. This doesn't mean you need to be demanding or argumentative. It does mean that you present your position and/or requests as if you are certain that this is what you want. A quiet, solid, clear confidence is often your best attitude.

4) Consider your long-term relationship with this person or people.
What impact will the results of this interaction have over time? What will your relationship with him/her be if your suggestions are implemented? What will it be like if the suggestions are not implemented?

5) Begin where they are, that is, acknowledging that they have a particular perspective that makes sense for them. This is best done by considering their mood and/or attitude, as well as the particular position he/she may have at the beginning of the discussion.

6) Consider the larger context. What factors might make it difficult for the person to do what you want? Can you develop some ideas that would minimize these difficulties, or better yet, turn them into advantages for him/her?

7) What might you be able to give the person 'no strings attached'? This can be information, and need not be anything physical (such as a gift). Giving something can be a good move towards developing a favorable context, a move inviting reciprocity but be perfectly willing to have your 'gift' taken, without expecting anything back. So, it needs to be something you can give freely.

8) Be clear on what you would get if this person agreed to your request. That is, what would you benefit of influencing them so that you get your outcome?

One way to determine your benefits is to ask yourself "What would have this done for me?" When you get the first answer, ask yourself the same question about that answer. You may determine a wider range of options that would satisfy you. This gives you more flexibility in making suggestions and/or requests from the person.

9) Are there any changes you could make to the environment that would make it more likely for the person to agree to your request?

This is intended as a thought provoking question, i.e. to get you to think about factors you might not ordinarily consider. For instance, there's some evidence that people are more likely to accommodate requests when they are eating (associating a pleasant activity with your request). Hence the number of business deals that are completed over lunch.

Another environmental factor when influencing someone is to consider whether to discuss an issue on the phone, in person, or by e-mail. In many cases, you will get a very different response to the same request, depending on how it is made.

Thinking of the environment in a slightly broader sense, for instance, could you, persuade a colleague of the person to, say, be more cooperative. Perhaps this increased cooperation would make it easier for the person to take your suggestions.

10) It goes without saying, of course, that when you are successful in influencing, you'll certainly live up to the agreements that you've made - both during and after the 'influence time'. These agreements should be implemented as the other person understands them. This requires you to verify that your communication has been understood in the same way you intended it.

The benefit to you is a long-term business relationship, in which you have established your reliability and in which you request the same. Atmospheres in which you trust one another makes better business sense for all.

A person may use this as a checklist before an attempt to influence some one else, decide to go through the list and choose which would be the most useful in a particular situation, or use it as a test of which items could be missing from an ongoing attempt at influence.

Source: Lynda L. Fudold, Advanced Communications Group

Suggested Readings

Power, Influence, And Persuasion: Sell Your Ideas And Make Things Happen. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005

The Essentials of Negotiation, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005

Winning Negotiations That Preserve Relationships, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004

Standford, Joseph: Negotiation: Redefining Success. Ottawa: Canadian Centre For Management Development, 1994.

Thomas, Jane: Guide To Managerial Persuasion And Influence. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004.

Harvard Business Review On Negotiation And Conflict Resolution. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000.

Aubuchon, Norbert: The Anatomy Of Persuasion. New York: AMACOM Books, 1997.

Bowden, John: Making Effective Speeches: How To Motivate And Persuade In Every Business Situation. Oxford: How To Books, Ltd., 1998.

Dawson, Roger: Secrets Of Power Negotiating: Inside Secrets From A Master Negotiator. Franklin Lakes: The Career Press, 1999.

Forsyth, Patrick: Conducting Effective Negotiations: How To Get The Deal You Want. Plymouth: How To Books, Ltd., 1997.

Hook, John R: The Agile Manager's Guide To Influencing People. Bristol: Velocity Business Publishing, 1999.

Patterson, James G: How To Become A Better Negotiator. New York : AMACOM Books, 1996.

Tingley, Judith C: The Power Of Indirect Influence. New York: AMACOM Books, 2001.

Handbook on Conflict Management Skills

CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Knowledge ● Technology ● People

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Purpose of this Handbook

The handbooks developed by Centre for Good Governance are intended primarily for personnel in public administration. They offer an overview of some of the principal skills that are essential for effective performance.

They draw heavily upon existing literature and current practices in public and private organizations around the world and include numerous references and links to useful web resources.

They are not comprehensive ‘guides’ or ‘how to’ booklets. Rather, they incorporate the perspectives of experts in the specific domains whose knowledge, insights, advice and experiences prove handy in honing skills essential for strengthening the capacity for effectiveness of public service at all levels of government.

This handbook, *Conflict Management Skills,* focuses on how personnel in the public administration can develop approaches and strategies that will enable them to effectively deal with workplace conflicts in a variety of contexts.

1 Understanding a Conflict

What is a conflict? A conflict is the expression of disagreement between individuals or groups that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs, through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. It can also originate from past rivalries and personality differences. Other causes of conflict include trying to negotiate before the timing is right or at a time before the needed information is available.

From the above definition, it is obvious that a conflict has the following components:

- A conflict is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which people perceive a threat (physical, emotional, power, status, etc.) to their well-being
- A conflict is caused by the differences and clash of personalities – attitudes, beliefs, values and needs.
- A conflict arises when people try to make others change their actions or to gain an unfair advantage.
- A conflict arises when one party refuses to accept the fact that the other party holds something as a value rather than a preference.
- Participants in conflicts tend to respond on the basis of their perceptions of the situation, rather than an objective review of it.
- Creative problem-solving strategies are essential to positive approaches to conflict management.

It is also important for the managers to understand the underlying differences that distinguish the concepts of conflict resolution, conflict management and conflict prevention.

1. **Conflict Resolution** means eliminating the conflict by arriving at a mutually beneficial outcome. In other words, conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the underlying causes of conflict and mutual acceptance of each of the contending parties.
2. **Conflict Management** means limitation or mitigation of a conflict, without necessarily solving it, so that the work-process is not disrupted.
3. **Conflict Prevention** implies anticipation of a possible conflict and taking measures beforehand to ensure that the conflict does not arise.

When conflict is understood, it is easier to find ways to predict it, prevent it, transform it and resolve it. Managers must consider the work environment and anticipate possible conflicts that are likely to arise in the workplace to take timely corrective actions beforehand and to transform these conflict situations into opportunities for positive outcomes. They should ask themselves and reflect on:

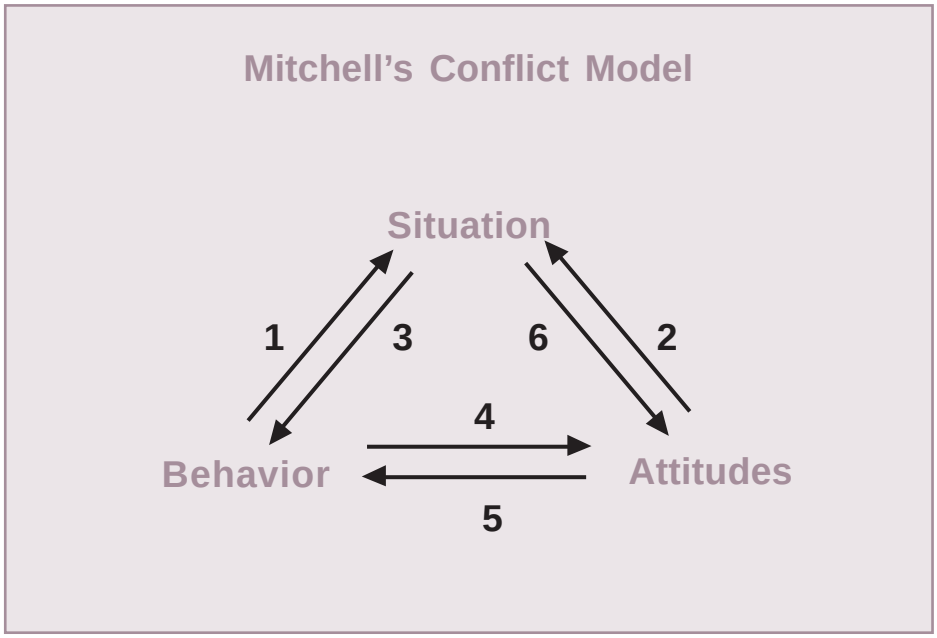
- What are the key sources and areas of conflict in the workplace?
- When do they generally tend to occur?
- How do people respond to the conflicts as they arise?
- Are there certain factors in the environment that make problems worse, especially at times of conflict?
- Does the office provide channels for expressing normal problems and concerns?

When they solve problems, do they do so for the moment, or do they put in place systems for addressing these types of problems if they recur?

2 Nature & Structure of Conflict - A Model

A conflict has characteristics of its own, and it is possible to analyze its structure and behavior. A simple model to easily understand the structure of conflicts is provided by C.R.Mitchell in his book “The Structure of International Conflict.” Though the model was created to describe political and military conflicts in an international scenario, it is also equally well applicable to the complex conflict situations between individuals in an office or organizational environment.

According to C.R.Mitchell, conflict structure consists of three parts: attitudes, behavior and situations and the interaction among these three parts create conflicts between individuals or groups.



According to Mitchell:

1. The situation impacts behavior – failure to reach targeted goals creates frustration and prompts people to strive to reach those goals.
2. The situation impacts attitudes – incompatible goals increase the suspicion and distrust between the people.

3. Behavior impacts the situation – success can introduce new questions in the conflict as demands increases.

4. Behavior impacts attitudes – destruction increases hatred, success can impact the group solidarity and the notion of “us”.

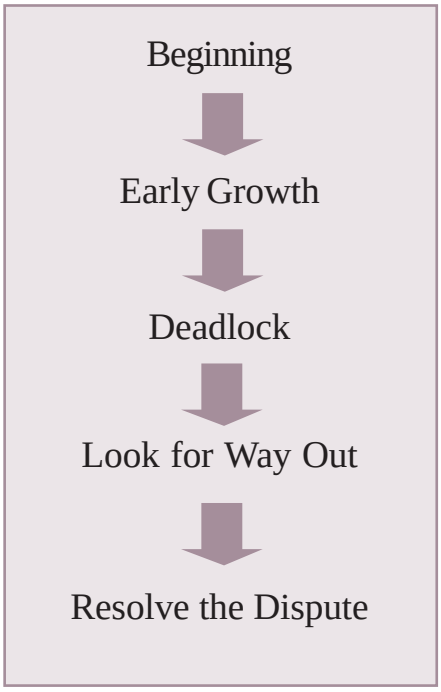
5. Attitudes impact behavior – expectations such as “our traditional enemies will attack again” will impact the defensive planning and preventive actions.

6. Attitudes impact the situation – the longer the conflict continues, more questions will be introduced.

Mitchell contends that conflicts are caused by mixed-motive relationships where both the involved parties have cooperative and competitive goals. The competitive element creates conflict and the cooperative element creates incentives to negotiate an agreement.

3 Life-Cycle of a Conflict

A conflict is not a static situation, but a dynamic one. It is a process, taking time to evolve. The intensity level differs over the life-cycle of a conflict. An appreciation of the conflict cycle is essential on the part of managers, to understand how, where and when to apply different and appropriate strategies and measures of conflict management.



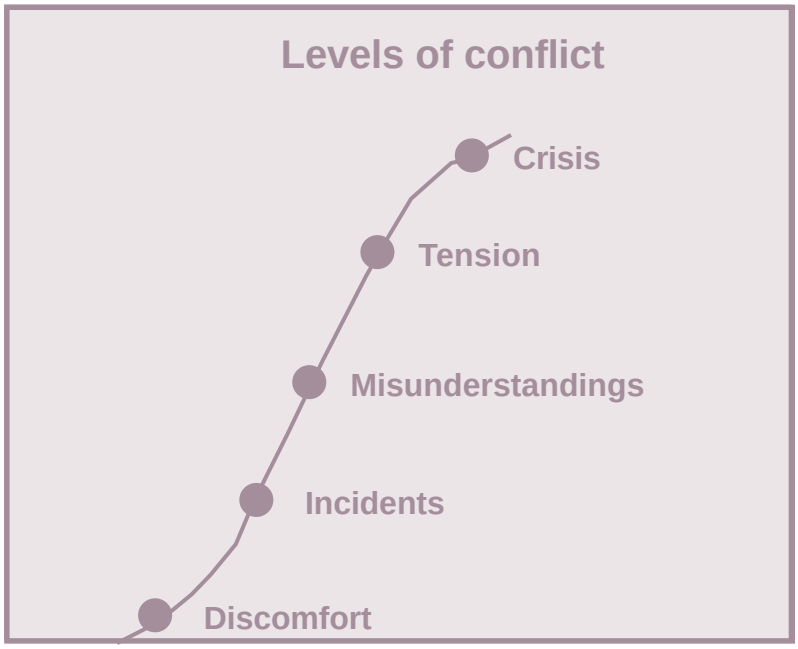
- **Life-cycle 1. Beginning:** A conflict begins to take form as the differences surface between the conflicting parties, and people begin to take sides. There is clear delineation of people in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’.
- **Life-cycle 2. Early growth:** The conflicting parties express their hostility openly. Each side increases its demands, and its sense of grievance swells. Each side looks for allies and seeks their moral support.
- **Life-cycle 3. Deadlock:** Each of the conflicting parties regards itself as having a just cause and it could lead to two possible situations: (a) a stalemate causing hurt or loss to one party or (b) ‘a mutually-hurting stalemate’ caused by exhaustion of strength and resources on the part of both the parties.

- **Life-cycle 4. Looking for a way out:** When the conflict reaches a stage where both parties suffer losses, they look for a way out of the impasse. This may necessitate mediation and arbitration by a third party.

- **Life-cycle 5. Settling the dispute or resolving the conflict?** Settlement implies a compromise or temporary truce by both the parties over the dispute. But, seldom does it lead to a solution in which the two parties can collaborate resolving the conflict. Conflict resolution, on the other hand, looks at the underlying causes of the conflict and deals with them, so that the conflict does not recur in future.

4 Levels of Conflict

Based on the level of intensity or emotional response it provokes, conflicts can be classified as – Discomforts, Incidents, Misunderstandings, Tension, Huge Crisis.



- **Discomfort:** The conflict has not yet clearly manifested itself, but has declared its onset with palpable signs of discomfort. One does not feel comfortable about a situation, but is not quite sure why? It is difficult to identify precisely what the problem is.
- **Incidents:** A short, sharp exchange has occurred without any lasting internal reaction. Some unpleasant incident has occurred between people that has left one upset or irritated.
- **Misunderstandings:** Here motives and facts are often confused or misperceived. Thoughts keep returning frequently toward the problem.
- **Tension:** Here relationships are weighed down by negative attitudes and fixed opinions. The way one feels about and regards the other person/s has significantly changed for the worse. The relationship is a constant source or worry and concern.
- **Crisis:** Behaviour is affected, normal functioning becomes difficult, extreme gestures are contemplated or executed. One is dealing with a major event like a possible rupture in a relationship which entails grave consequences.

Levels of Conflict Exercise

Choose a recent conflict involving you. It could be anything from a minor discomfort a huge crisis. What is it?

_____

DISCOMORT

Are you mulling over the situation because it is not sitting quite right with you?

_____

What are you feelings/ thoughts about it?_____

So far, have you learnt quite a little about it? _____

INCIDENT

Can you point to one or several specific occasions in which you clashed on this subject? _____

What was said that was upsetting? _____

MISUNDERSTANDING

Do you believe the other person has misinterpreted your feeling, motives or responsibilities? How?

_____

Could you be misinterpreting the other person's? How?

_____

TENSION

So you now hold a negative stance towards the person? Does each new interaction confirm your poor opinion of him/her? In what ways?

_____

CRISIS

Has a major explosion occurred?_____

Were extreme measures threatened? What? _____

_____

Were extreme measures executed? What?_____

_____

Was the outcome constructive or destructive? In what ways?

_____

Adapted from materials of The Conflict Resolution Network PO Box 1016, Chastwood NSW 2057, Australia, (02) 9419-8500

5 Functional & Dysfunctional Conflicts

Sometimes a conflict can act as a positive force within an organization, while at other times it can act as a negative force. Accordingly, conflicts are classified as Functional and Dysfunctional. **Functional conflict** acts as a positive force that is the occurrence and resolution of conflict may stimulate the organization to constructive problem-solving. It may also lead people to look for ways of productively altering how they do things. The conflict-resolution process can ultimately be a stimulus for positive change within an organization

Dysfunctional conflict acts as a negative force, that is, the occurrence and resolution of conflict may result in digression of efforts from goal attainment and result in squandering of productive resources of the organization. Conflicting workplace ideas, attitudes and actions may lead to anger, tension, and anxiety. Deep hostilities and lasting conflicts may eventually lead to violent behavior between employees.

Therefore, it would only be fair to say that conflict may sometimes be advantageous and at other times destructive. Workplace managers must be sensitive to the consequences of conflict. These consequences range from negative outcomes (such as loss of skilled employees, sabotage, low quality of work, stress and even violence) to positive outcomes (such as creative alternatives, increased motivation and commitment, high quality of work, and personal satisfaction).

6 Positive-Sum, Negative Sum and Zero-Sum Situations

Based on the outcomes of a dispute or negotiation, conflicting situations can also be classified as zero-sum, positive-sum and negative-sum conflicts.

In a **zero-sum** situation, it is inevitable that if one party gains some advantage, the other party suffers a corresponding loss. These situations arise when a “fixed pie” is to be distributed between two parties. For example, if there is only one job with two people vying for it, one person will get it and the other person will not. One job won and one job lost equals zero. The gains and losses add up to zero.

In **positive-sum** situations, gain for one party does not necessarily mean a corresponding loss to the other party. There is additional sum available to be distributed between the contending parties and gain for one person or party by the equivalent additional sum does not mean a corresponding loss to other contending person or party. The gains and losses add up to greater than zero.

Negative-sum situations are characterized by a shrinking pie. There are no gains to be distributed but only losses to be reduced. If the actual loss is less than the expected loss, the differential is treated as a gain. If a department is expecting a 10% cut in the budgetary allocation but if the actual cut is only 5%, the gain to the department is 5%.

7 Cost Implications of Conflicts

The consequences of conflicts at workplace can be costly to the parties involved, to colleagues and teams and to the organization as a whole. Few would disagree with the view of Dana, D (Managing Differences – How to Build Better Relationships at Work and Home) that "unmanaged employee conflict is perhaps the largest reducible cost in organizations – and probably the least recognized."

The facts revealed by the various studies bear testimony to the huge cost implications of conflicts at workplace.

- 42% of a manager's time is spent addressing conflict in the workplace. (Watson, C & Hoffman, R, Managers as Negotiators, Leadership Quarterly 7(1), 1996)
- "Fortune 500 Senior Executives spend 20% of their time in litigation related activities." (Levine, Stewart, The Many Costs of Conflict, Mediate.com website, 1998)
- "Over 65% of performance problems result from strained relationships between employees, not from deficits in individual employee's skill or motivation." (Dana, Dan, The Dana Measure of Financial Cost of Organizational Conflict, 2001)
- Up to 30% of a typical manager's time is spent dealing with conflict. (Thomas, K and Schmidt, W., "A survey of managerial interests with respect to conflict", Academy of Management Journal, June 1976.)
- A 1996 study demonstrated that 42% of a manager's time is spent on conflict-related negotiations. (Watson, C and Hoffman, R, Managers as Negotiators, Leadership Quarterly 7 (1) 1996.)
- The turnover costs for an employee is anywhere between 75% and 150% of the annual salary. (Phillips, D.T, "The Price Tag of Turnover", Personnel Journal, Dec. 1990)

- “Employees in high pressure/low control situations or high effort/low reward situations have much greater risks to their physical and mental well-being. (Tangri, Ravi, Stress Costs - Stress Cures: How to recover productivity lost to stress)
- “The number of employees seeking help for work-related conflict has increased from 23 percent in 1999 to close to 30 percent in 2001.” (Warren Shepel, “Workplace Trends Linked to Mental Health Crisis in Canada”)
- A 2005 UK survey by Roffey Park found that “78% of managers are suffering from work-related stress, 52% have experienced harassment, 46% have seen an increase in conflict at work.” (Roffey Park, “Failure to manage change heightens stress, harassment and conflict at work”)
- “The total value of lost work time due to stress is estimated to be $1.7 billion. (Warren Shepel, “Health & Wellness” Research Database)
- “Employees who rate their managers as “sensitive” miss an estimated 3.7 days of work, wheras employees whose managers are rated as “non-sensitive” miss approximately 6.2 days of work. (MacBriade-King, J.L., and Bachmann, K., “Solutions for the stressed-out worker”, The Conference Board of Canada,1999)
- An estimated 16% of employees feel that poor interpersonal relations are a source of stress at work. (Warren Shepel, “Health & Wellness” Research Database, 2005)

The costs of conflicts are both tangible and intangible, influencing the choice of design of a conflict management system. Quantifying the cost implications of conflicts in a work place is indeed a difficult task, as many conflicts are intangible.

The tangible costs of conflicts include –

- Litigations(grievances, complaints, lawsuits etc.)
- Administrative investigations

- Services of third party mediators
- Sabotages
- Thefts
- Damages
- Disability claims

The intangible cost of conflicts include –

- Absenteeism
- Wasted time
- Loss of productivity
- Stress, frustration, and anxiety
- Loss of sleep
- Strained relationships
- Employee turnover
- Injury and accidents
- Sick leave

The Dana Measure of Financial Cost Of Organizational Conflict

Cost Estimation Worksheet

COST FACTORS	ESTIMATED COST
1) Wasted time - salary/ benefits per hour/ day	Rs._____
2) Reduced decision quality - any decision made by you and/or others, independently or jointly, affected by the conflict	Rs._____
3) Loss of skilled employees - cost of loss of human resource	Rs._____
4) Restructuring - inefficiency of work redesigned to accommodate conflict	Rs._____
5) Sabotage/ theft/ damage - equipment, work processes, reputations	Rs._____
6) Lowered job motivation - reduced performance/productivity - % reduction times salary	Rs._____
7) Lost work time - number of days lost at prorated daily salary	Rs._____
8) Health costs - stress related - insurance premiums linked to rate of claims	Rs._____
TOTAL COST:	Rs._____

Source: www.mediationworks.com / tools

Cramby River Consultants James A. Cram and Richard K. Mac Williams (The Cost of Conflict in the Workplace) divide the cost consequences into following three categories, consisting of first, second and third-order effects.

- **First-Order Effects** - These are consequences that are readily determined to be the result of a particular conflict situation, and are fairly easy to quantify. We call these first order effects. For example, as a result of poorly managed conflict, one of the disputants may leave the organization. If a disputant doesn't leave, then there is a possibility that peers will escape the tension and stress by leaving. The first-order effect in this case would be the direct replacement costs for the employee who has left.

- **Second-Order Effects** - Assessing the effect of a new hire on team effectiveness may be difficult. Likewise, trying to quantify a change in team productivity can be very difficult. This is an example of a second-order effect, in that the consequence might not be viewed as a result of the original conflict, and because it is not specific to a known problem, it is harder to quantify.

- **Third-Order Effects** - When conflict occurs frequently in an organization, the effects often become "enculturated". This leads to a generally unpleasant work environment, in which issues are not discussed and where fear, distrust and passive-aggressive behaviour become the norm. Such situations may affect the organization's reputation, resulting in lost business and making it difficult to hire or retain good people. These consequences, which are classified as third-order effects, are difficult or impossible to quantify.

What can managers do to manage more effectively with conflicts and bring down their costs? Cram and Williams prescribe the following measures:

- **Increase knowledge** Increased awareness and training of conflicts and conflict resolution strategies among the employees through workshops is the first and the most crucial step.

- **Acknowledge conflict honestly** Conflict exists in many human interactions. Discussing the subject at staff meetings and empowering subordinates to use creative ways to address conflict encourages them to learn resolution strategies.
- **Develop sensitivity to chronic employee conflict** Look for major changes in employee behaviors. Be alert to passive-aggressive behaviors such as withholding important information, chronic oppositional attitudes, chronic tardiness and resistance to firm commitments. Note body language when employees interact, especially in tense situations.

Establish standard procedures for resolving conflicts With training, managers can learn how to act as arbitrators or mediators. The manager's role in conflict-resolution requires a delicate balance. Consciously creating an environment that allows open and constructive exploration of conflict issues will empower and encourage employees to resolve disputes themselves, or with minimal management intervention.

8 Causes of Workplace Conflicts

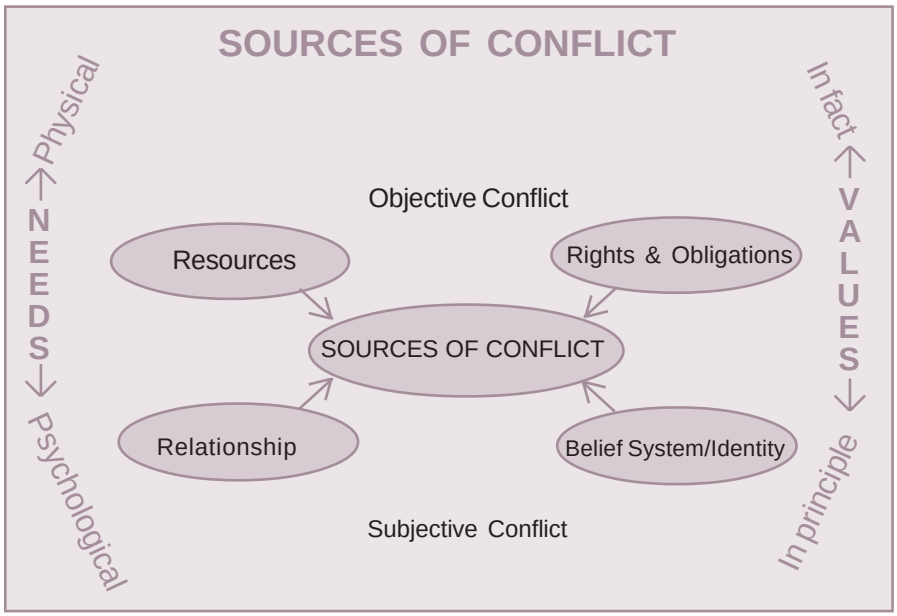
Understanding how conflicts arise at workplace can enable managers in anticipating situations that may eventually snowball into huge crises. While it appears that anything can trigger off a conflict at the workplace, conflict typically stems from a limited number of causes – organizational factors and interpersonal factors.

The **Organizational Factors** include –

- **Organizational Change:** Organizational change may entail loss of control, feeling of uncertainty, sense of insecurity and concern about coping with new job demands. Naturally, resistance to change should not only be anticipated, but it should be expected. The result is the rise of a conflict.
- **Diverse Employee Groups:** Conflicts are also common in organizations with a large number of employees who differ in terms of gender, religion, language, ethnicity and economic status. They serve as rallying points for people to come together and form informal cliques. Informal groups are often a breeding source of conflicts.
- **Strategic / operational disagreement:** Conflict may occur when there is an inherent disagreement between an organization's mission or the objectives and strategies employed to accomplish that mission. Conflict may also arise when there is dissonance about the kind of processes to be employed for attaining the objectives.
- **Competition between groups:** Interpersonal and interdepartmental conflict may arise as a result of the various groups competing with each other over sharing of an organization's resources - time, money, space, materials and equipment
- **Unreasonable workloads/ standards:** If the people in an organization are asked to do more work than what is reasonably possible, it may result in frustration, eventually culminating into interpersonal or inter-departmental conflicts.

- **Jurisdictional ambiguities:** Conflicts may also surface when job boundaries and task responsibilities are not clearly defined. Individuals may disagree about

The **Interpersonal Factors** include –



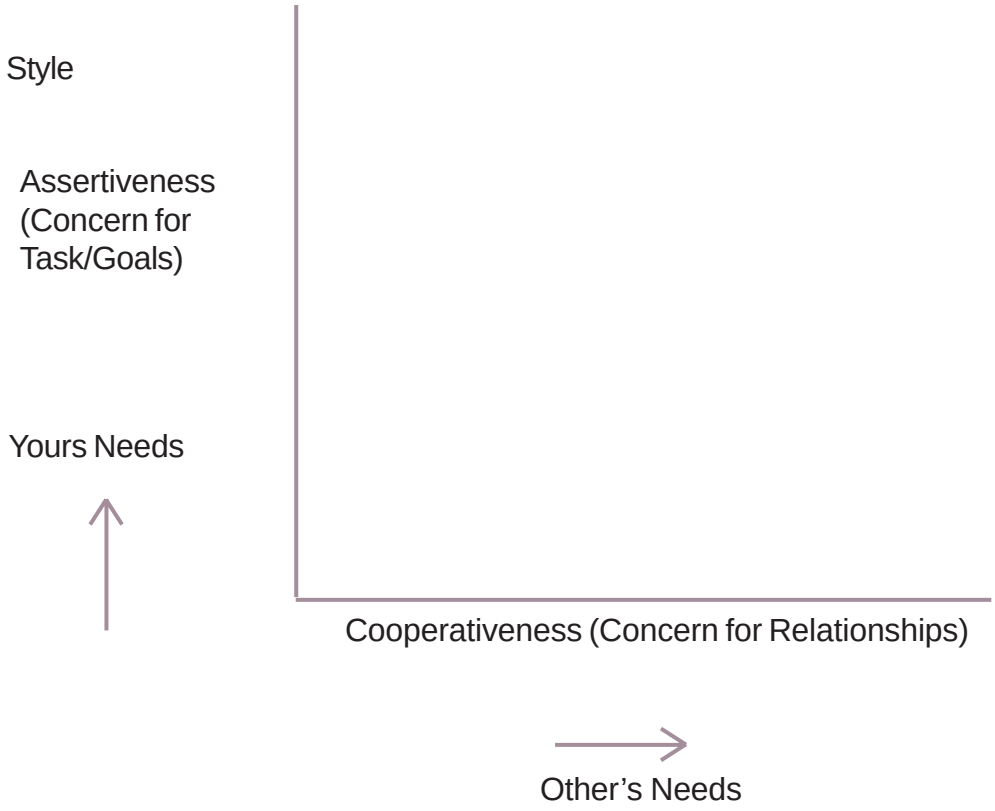
The **Interpersonal Factors** include –

- **Lack of common understanding:** Differences in perceptions about specific situations, decisions made and actions taken may cause dissonance and conflicts among the people in the organization.
- **Personality Clash:** A personality conflict results when two people simply do not get along or do not view things similarly. Personality tensions are caused by differences in personality, attitudes, values, and beliefs.
- **Status Differences:** Power and status conflict may occur when one individual has questionable influence over another. People might engage in conflict to increase their power or status in an organization.
- **Goal Differences:** Conflict may occur because people are pursuing different goals. Goal conflicts in individual work units are a natural part of any organization.

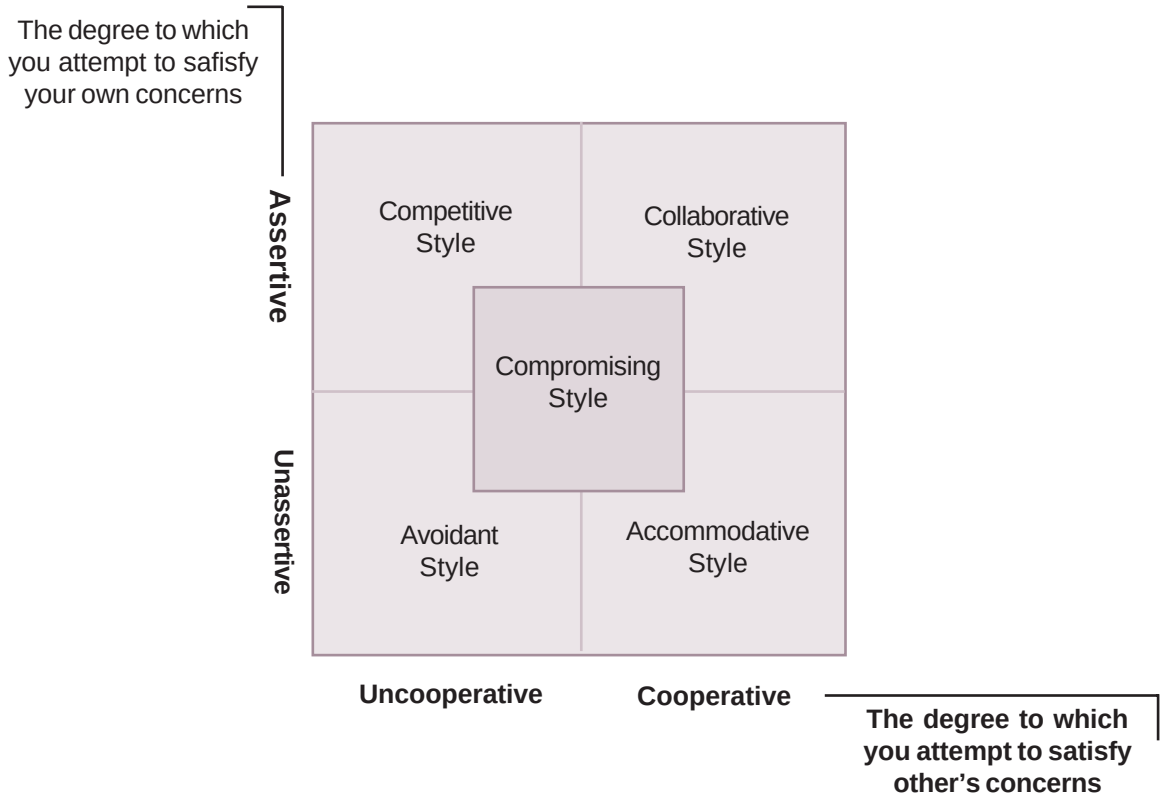
Communication Breakdown: Communication process tends to get distorted due to stylistic differences - speaking styles, writing styles, and non-verbal communication styles. Faulty communication leads to misperceptions and misunderstandings that can lead to long-standing conflict.

9 Conflict Resolution Styles and Their Consequences

Thomas and Kilmann (Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument) developed a conflict-handling grid that helps managers to understand the different styles of conflict-management. The grid consists of five conflict-management styles based on two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is the degree to which managers try to satisfy their own concerns. Co-operation is the degree to which they wish to satisfy others' concerns.



It is a manager's general tendency towards assertiveness and cooperativeness that defines his typical response to conflict-management - **competing, accommodating, avoiding, compromising** and **collaborating**.



1. **Competing Style:** The competing style of conflict resolution is essentially a win-lose approach, characterized by a high degree of assertiveness and low cooperativeness. This is a power-oriented mode in which a manager uses whatever power seems appropriate - ability to argue, rank, economic sanctions, etc. – for self-aggrandizement. It relies on -

    - an aggressive style of communication,
    - low regard for future relationships, and
    - the exercise of coercive power.

    Managers using a competitive style tend to seek control over a situation, in both substance and ground rules. They are concerned that loss of such control will result in solutions that fail to meet their needs.

2. **Accommodating Style**: The opposite of competing style, the accommodating style is characterized by a relatively high degree of cooperativeness. Managers using this style yield their personal goals, objectives and desired outcomes to those of others. The accommodating style is most appropriate when managers

realize that they are in the wrong or they are open to correction. This conflict-resolution style is important for preserving future relations between the parties.

3. **Avoiding Style:** The managers, who adopt this style, are characterized to be low in both asserting and cooperating. Managers display a passive behavior that allows neither the pursuit of their personal goals nor those of others. This style is appropriate when managers consider the issue inconsequential or there is no way of winning the situation, but disruption of it is a costly option.

4. **Compromising Style:** A middle-of-the-road approach between competing and accommodating style, the compromising style of conflict management is characterized by both assertiveness and cooperativeness on moderate level. The principal objective is to find a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies both the contending parties. This style enables managers to address an issue more directly than avoiding,

5. **Collaborating Style:** It is “win-win approach to problem-solving, this style is characterized by a high level of both assertiveness and cooperation. Collaboration offers the chance for consensus, integration of needs and the potential to yield optimal results. It brings new time, energy, and ideas to resolve the dispute meaningfully.

Managers must realize that no one particular style is better suited than the other for all occasions. Some particular styles, however, are less suited to conflict-management or resolution such as an avoidant style or a competitive style, and a collaborative style is generally considered the best way to increase the likelihood that the interests of all participants will be considered. However, the appropriateness and effectiveness of conflict resolution styles depends on the specific situation, personality styles of the contending parties, the desired outcomes, and the time available.

Conflict Styles: When and Which to Use

Competing

Often appropriate when:

- An emergency looms.
- You are not sure you are right and being right is more important than preserving relationships.
- The issue is trivial and others do not really care what happens.

Often inappropriate when:

- When collaboration or cooperation has not been attempted
- Cooperation from others is important
- Used routinely for most issues
- Self-respect of others is diminished needlessly

Collaborating

Often appropriate when:

- The issues and relationships are both significant.
- Cooperation is important.
- A creative end is important.
- Reasonable hope exists to meet all concerns.

Often inappropriate when:

- Time is short.
- The issue is unimportant.
- You are overloaded with "processing."
- The goals of the other person are certainly wrong.

Compromising

Often appropriate when:

- Cooperation is important but time or resources are limited.
- Finding some solution, even less than the best, is better than a complete stalemate.
- Efforts to collaborate will be misunderstood as forcing.

Often inappropriate when:

- Finding the most creative solution possible is essential.
- You can't live with the consequences.

Avoiding

Often appropriate when:

- The issue is trivial.
- The relationship is insignificant.
- Time is short and a decision not necessary.
- You have little power but still wish to block the other person.

Often inappropriate when:

- You care about both the relationship and the issues involved.
- Used habitually for most issues.
- Negative feelings may linger.
- Others would benefit from hearing information.

Accommodating

Often appropriate when:

- You really don't care about the issue.
- You are powerless and have no wish to block the other. Often inappropriate when:
- You are likely to harbor resentment.
- Used habitually in order to gain acceptance (outcome: depression and lack of self-respect).
- Others wish to collaborate and will feel like enforcers if you accommodate.

Conflict Style Exercise for Personal Assessment

(Source: Conflict 911.Com Free Resources)

For each of the following, choose the statement (A or B) that best describes how you would respond. Sometimes neither statement will be very typical nor accurate for you, but try to choose the one that seems more accurate of the two. Circle your response.

Certain points in the box below are repeated – is that okay?

1. [A]	There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
[B]	Rather than negotiate the issue on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.
2. [A]	I try to find a compromise solution.
[B]	I attempt to deal with all of his or her and my concerns.
3. [A]	I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
[B]	I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.
4. [A]	I try to find a compromise solution.
[B]	I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.
5. [A]	I consistently seek other's help in working out a solution.
[B]	I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tension.
6. [A]	I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
[B]	I try to win my position.
7. [A]	I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over.
[B]	I give up some points in exchange for others.
8. [A]	I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.
[B]	I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
9. [A]	I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
[B]	I make some effort to get my way.
10. [A]	I am firm in pursuing my goals.
B]	I try to find a compromise solution.
11. [A]	I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.
[B]	I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.

12. [A] I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.

B] I will let the other person have some of his or her position if the other person will let me have some of mine.

13. [A] I propose a middle ground.

[B] I press to get my point made.

14. [A] I tell the other person my ideas and ask for his or her ideas.

[B] I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.

15. [A] I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship.

[B] I try to do what is necessary to avoid tension.

16. [A] I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.

[B] I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position.

17. [A] I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.

[B] I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tension.

18. [A] If it makes the other person happy, I might let him or her maintain his or her views.

[B] I will let the other person have some of his or her position if the other person will let me have some of mine.

19. [A] I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.

[B] I try to postpone the issue until I have had time to think it over.

20. [A] I attempt to immediately work through our differences.

[B] I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.

21. [A] In approaching negotiation, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.

[B] I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.

22. [A] I try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person's and mine.

[B] I assert my wishes.

23.[A] I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.

[B] There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.

24. [A] If the other's position seems very important to him or her, I try to meet his or her wishes.

[B] I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.

25. [A] I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.

[B] In approaching negotiation, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.

26. [A] I propose middle ground.

[B] I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our needs.

27. [A] I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy.

[B] If it makes the other person happy, I might let him or her maintain his or her views.

28. [A] I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.

[B] I usually seek the other's help in working out a solution.

29. [A] I propose a middle ground.

[B] I feel differences are not always worth worrying about.

30. [A] I try not to hurt the other's feelings.

[B] I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.

Score the exercise when you have finished.

Scoring the Conflict Style Exercise

Circle the letters below which you circled on each item of the questionnaire.

	Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating
1.				A	B
2.		B	A		
3.	A				B
4.			A		B
5.		A		B	
6.	B			A	
7.			B	A	
8.	A	B			
9.	B			A	
10.	A		B		
11.		A			B
12.			B	A	
13.	B		A		
14.	B	A			
15.				B	A
16.	B				A
17.	A			B	
18.			B		A
19.		A		B	
20.		A	B		
21.		B			A
22.	B		A		
23.		A		B	
24.			B		A
25.	A				B
26.		B	A		
27.				A	B
28.	A	B			
29.			A	B	
30.		B			A
Total items circled in each column :					

Interpreting Your Scores

Your profile of scores indicates the repertoire of conflict-handling skills which you, as an individual, use in the kind of conflict situations you face. The following ranges indicate the percentile scores based on others who have taken the test. Remember that extreme scores are not necessarily bad, since your situation may require high or low use of a given conflict-handling style.

Competing: High scores: 8-12; Middle scores: 4-7; Low scores: 0-3

Collaborating: High scores: 9-12; Middle scores: 6-8; Low scores: 0-5

Compromising: High scores: 9-12; Middle scores: 5-8; Low scores: 0-4

Avoiding: High scores: 8-12; Middle scores: 5-7; Low scores: 0-4

Accommodating: High scores: 7-12; Middle scores: 4-6; Low scores: 0-3

Competing

Uses:

- When quick, decisive action is vital.
- On important issues where unpopular courses of action need to be implemented
- On issues vital to company welfare when you know you are right.
- To protect yourself against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behaviour.

If you scored High:

- Are you surrounded by “yes” men?
- Are others usually in agreement with you? Is it because they have learned that it is unwise to disagree with you, or have given up trying to influence you? This closes you off from information.

If you scored Low:

- Do you often feel powerless in situations?
- Do you have trouble taking a firm stand, even when you see the need? (Sometimes concerns for others’ feelings or anxieties about the use of power

cause us to vacillate, which may mean postponing the decision and possibly adding to the suffering and/ or resentment of others.)

Collaborating

Uses:

- To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised
- When your objective is to learn
- To merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem
- To gain commitment by incorporating others' concerns into a consensual decision
- To work through those hard feelings which have been interfering with an interpersonal relationship

If you scored High:

- Do you spend time discussing issues in depth that do not seem to deserve it? (Trivial problems do not require optimal solutions and not all personal differences need to be hashed out. The overuse of collaboration and consensual decision-making sometimes represents a desire to minimize risk by diffusing responsibility for a decision or by postponing action.)
- Does your collaborative behaviour fail to elicit collaborative responses from others? (You may be projecting something that would indicate the presence of defensiveness, strong feelings, impatience, competitiveness, or conflicting interests.)

If you scored Low:

- Is it hard for you to see differences as an opportunity for joint gain or as an opportunity to learn or solve problems?

Collaborating

Uses:

- To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised
- When your objective is to learn
- To merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem
- To gain commitment by incorporating others' concerns into a consensual decision
- To work through those hard feelings which have been interfering with an interpersonal relationship

If you scored High:

- Do you spend time discussing issues in depth that do not seem to deserve it? (Trivial problems do not require optimal solutions and not all personal differences need to be hashed out. The overuse of collaboration and consensual decision-making sometimes represents a desire to minimize risk by diffusing responsibility for a decision or by postponing action.)
- Does your collaborative behaviour fail to elicit collaborative responses from others? (You may be projecting something that would indicate the presence of defensiveness, strong feelings, impatience, competitiveness, or conflicting interests.)

If you scored Low:

- Is it hard for you to see differences as an opportunity for joint gain or as an opportunity to learn or solve problems?

Compromising

Uses:

- When goals are moderately important, but not worth the effort or potential disruption of a more assertive mode

- When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals, e.g., labor management bargaining
- To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure
- To achieve temporary settlement in complex issues
- As a backup mode when collaboration or competition fails to be successful

If you scored High:

- Do you concentrate so heavily upon the practicalities and tactics of compromise that you sometimes lose sight of larger issues, e.g., principles, values, long-term objectives?
- Does an emphasis on bargaining and trading create a cynical climate of gamesmanship?

If you scored Low:

- Do you find yourself too sensitive or embarrassed to be effective in bargaining situations?
- Do you find it hard to make concessions?

Avoiding

Uses:

- When an issue is trivial, of only passing importance, or when other more important issues are pressing.
- When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns
- When the potential damage of confronting a conflict outweighs the benefits of its resolution
- To let people cool down, to reduce tension to a productive level, and to regain perspective and composure

- When gathering more information outweighs the advantages of an immediate decision
- When others can resolve the conflict more effectively
- When the issue seems tangential or symptomatic of another, basic issue

If you scored High:

- Do people have trouble getting your input on issues?
- Sometimes an unnecessary amount of energy can be devoted to caution and the avoiding of issues, indicating that issues need to be faced and resolved.
- Are decisions on important issues made by default?

If you scored Low:

- Do you find yourself hurting people's feelings or stirring up hostilities? (You may need to exercise more discretion in confronting issues or more tact in framing issues in non-threatening ways.)
- Do you often feel harried or overwhelmed by a number of issues? (You may need to devote more time to setting priorities, deciding which issues are relatively unimportant, and perhaps delegating them to others.)

Accommodating

Uses:

- When you realize that you are wrong, to allow a better position to be heard, to learn from others, and to show that you are reasonable
- When the issue is much more important to the other person than to you, to satisfy the needs of others, and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship
- To build up a social credit for later issues that could be important to you

- When continued competition would only damage your cause, i.e. when you are outmatched and losing
- When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important
- To aid the managerial development of subordinates by allowing them to experiment and learn from their own mistakes

If you scored High:

- Do you feel that your own ideas and concerns are not getting the attention they deserve? (Deferring too much to the concerns of others can deprive you of influence, respect and recognition. It also deprives others of your potential contributions.)
- Is discipline lax? (Although discipline for its own sake may be of little value, there are often rules, procedures, and assignments where implementation is crucial for you or the organization.)

If you scored Low:

- Do you have trouble building goodwill with others?
- Do others often seem to regard you as unreasonable?
- Do you have trouble admitting when you are wrong?
- Do you know when to give up?

HOW DO YOU REACT TO CONFLICT?

How would you confront:

- a vendor who ignores your complaints about defects in the products he supplies to your organization?
- a colleague who refuses to stop smoking in a commonly shared work area?
- an insurance company that jacks up your rates after a mere fender bender?

This Conflict Management Style Survey, by organizational trainer Dr. Marc Robert, will help you examine the ways you respond to those inevitable pockets of resistance.

When answering the questions, choose a single frame of reference: Imagine yourself at work, at home, or in a social situation. Keeping that perspective in mind, answer each question. Distribute 10 points among the four possible answers. You'll want to assign the highest number of points to the answers that seem most relevant to you. Use all 10 points. Zeros are allowed if you feel one of the four answers doesn't apply to you at all. Here's an example of how it works:

When people I supervise become involved in a personal conflict, I usually:

A. __5__ Intervene to settle the dispute
B. __1__ Call a meeting to discuss the problem.
C. __3__ Offer to help, if I can.
D. __1__ Ignore the problem.

BE SURE, YOUR ANSWERS ADD Up To 10.

1. When someone I care about is hostile toward me – for instance, yells, threatens me, uses abusive language – I usually:

A. ____ Respond in kind.
B. ____ Try to persuade the person to cool down.
C. ____ Hang in there and hear the person out.
D. ____ Walk away.

2. When someone who is relatively unimportant to me is hostile toward me, I usually:

A. ____ Respond in kind.
B. ____ Try to persuade the person to cool down.
C. ____ Hang in there and hear the person out.
D. ____ Walk away.

3. When I walk in on a heated argument, I'm likely to:

A. _____ Jump in and take sides.

B. _____ Mediate

C. _____ Keep quiet and observe what's going on.

D. _____ Leave the scene.

4. When I suspect another person is taking advantage of me, I'm apt to:

A. _____ Try as hard as I can to get the person to stop.

B. _____ Rely on persuasive arguments and "the facts" to turn the person around.

C. _____ Change the way I relate to the person.

D. _____ Accept the situation.

5. When I don't see eye-to-eye with someone, my typical response is to:

A. _____ Try to get the person to see the problem as I do.

B. _____ Examine the problem between us as logically as possible.

C. _____ Look long and hard for a workable compromise.

D. _____ Let time take its course; the problem will work itself out.

6. The quality I value most in dealing with conflict is:

A. _____ Emotional control

B. _____ Intelligence

C. _____ Frankness.

D. _____ Patience

7. After a run-in with someone I care about a great deal, I:

A. _____ Want to go back and get the person to see my point of view.

B. _____ Want to go back and work it out – no matter what it takes.

C. _____ Worry about it a lot but don't plan to initiate any further contact.

D. _____ Let it lie.

8. When I see a serious conflict developing between two people I care about, I usually:

A. _____ Tell them “I’m disappointed if you can’t come to terms with each other”

B. _____ Attempt to persuade them to resolve their differences

C. _____ Watch to see what develops

D. _____ Leave the scene

9. When I see a serious conflict developing between two people who are relatively unimportant to me, I usually:

A. _____ Tell them I’m disappointed they can’t come to terms with each other.

B. _____ Attempt to persuade them to resolve their differences

C. _____ Watch to see what develops

D. _____ Leave the scene.

10. The feedback people give me about how I behave when faced with opposition indicates that I:

A. _____ Push hard to get what I want

B. _____ Try to work out differences cooperatively.

C. _____ Am easygoing and take a soft or conciliatory stance.

D. _____ Usually sidestep conflict.

11. When I’m having a serious disagreement with someone, I:

A. _____ Talk until I feel I’ve gotten my point across.

B. _____ May talk a little bit more than I listen.

C. _____ Make a real effort to listen, probing more details and checking to see that I’ve understood what the person’s said.

D. _____ Am a passive listener, if I really can’t agree with what’s being said, I at least acknowledge the other person’s concern.

12. When involved in an extremely unpleasant conflict, I:

A. _____ Use humor to make light of the other person's words or actions

B. _____ Make an occasional joke about the situation or relationship.

C. _____ Make jokes about myself or my actions

D. _____ Keep it straight – no funny stuff.

13. When someone does something that irritates me (e.g., a person on the street cuts in front of me in line, a subordinate repeatedly comes in late), I generally communicate with the person by:

A. _____ Insisting that he or she looks me in the eye

B. _____ Looking him or her directly in the eye and maintaining eye contact

C. _____ Using intermittent eye contact

D. _____ Avoiding any eye contact

14. When someone does something that irritates me, I generally:

A. _____ Move in close, even touch the person, as I speak.

B. _____ Use my hands and body to illustrate my point.

C. _____ Stand close but don't touch the person.

D. _____ Stand back and keep my hands to myself.

15. When someone does something that irritates me, I generally:

A. _____ Use strong, direct language and tell the person to stop.

B. _____ Try to persuade the person to stop.

C. _____ Go easy on the person, explaining how I feel about what he or she has done.

D. _____ Say and do nothing.

SCORE ANALYSIS

When you've completed all 15 questions, add all the As, Bs, Cs, and Ds, and record the totals below. Then chart your score on the bar graph, and read the analysis that follows.

A	B	C	D
_____	_____	_____	_____

	A	B	C	D
150				
125				
100				
75				
50				
25				

A **Aggressive/ Confrontational:** If you selected primarily A responses, you're a "take the bull by the horns" type. You feel best when you're in a leadership role and are able to direct and control others. Taken to extremes, you can be intimidating and overly judgmental. You're generally contemptuous of people who don't stand up for themselves and feel frustrated when you can't get through to someone. When hard-pressed, you'll fight for what you want.

B **Assertive/ Persuasive:** If you scored high in this category, you're probably from the "use one's head to win" school of conflict management. Assertive/ persuasive people are generally strong willed and ambitious – but not overbearing. They'll use persuasion, not intimidation, to get others to follow their lead. Though self-reliant, they're also good team players who are willing to compromise to put an end to a long-running conflict.

C **Observant/ Introspective: If you scored high in this category you're likely to be the observant/ introspective variety.** When dealing with conflict, observant/ introspective people usually don't get flared up. They'll listen carefully to their opponent's point of view, then step back, examine the situation analytically and logically, and give

a factual pitch for their case. These types strongly believe that people have the right to be open about how they feel, but they're reserved about asserting their own rights and wishes. In the end, the Observant/Introspective will often defer to their opponent in the interest of harmony.

D **Avoiding/ Reactive (makes no sense):** A high score here suggests that you avoid conflict and confrontation at all costs. Avoiding/ Reactives often suppress their feelings – strong as they may be – to keep peace. If you fall into this camp, you're probably accepting, patient, and genuinely interested in the needs and welfare of others – but often at your own expense.

Understand that no one style of conflict management is better than another. In fact, most people go in and out of all four styles, depending on the situation. But if you seem to be relying too heavily on one approach, you may want to consider the advantages you could gain by deploying one of the other conflict management styles. Keep in mind, though, that even seasoned conflict managers hit an impasse now and then. So if your well-thought-out strategy is getting you nowhere fast, don't feel bad. Sometimes giving up is the better part of valor. As W. C. Fields once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. There's no sense in being a damn fool about it."

Conflict Resolution Skills

Occasionally as a leader in an organization you will be in a position where you will need to deal with conflict between two or more people. When that occurs, you will need some skills/knowledge to deal with it effectively. Below are a few simple ideas.

- Do not take sides.
- Do not allow yourself to become emotionally involved.
- Assume from the beginning that all participants have legitimate positions.
- Listen quietly no matter how unreasonable or violent the remarks are.
- Judging is not your task — the listener's role is not that of reformer, so avoid "I'm right, you're wrong".
- Allow all expression and emotions to be voiced without any interference or negative reaction on the listener's part.
- Listen with all your senses to understand whether a person is really conveying one message but meaning to convey something else.
- Avoid interrupting or arguing.
- Remember the importance of individual differences.
- Be wary of telling your own personal experiences or using yourself as an example — listen instead.
- Being told "everyone feels that way" makes it seem that you think this "immediate and crucial catastrophic predicament" is rather common and insignificant.
- Be aware of your biases and/or prejudices in relating to groups or individuals whose personalities may clash with your own.
- If the participants can't possibly talk with each other, have them talk separately with you.
- Don't be afraid to clarify a point:

10 Conflict Resolution – The Five 'A's Technique

The ultimate purpose of conflict-management is to minimize the incidence of dysfunctional conflict by mutually satisfying outcomes that help a team, group or organization function more effectively and achieve stated goals. Hence, managers must find a workable solution to workplace conflict to avoid conflict where possible and organizing to resolve conflict where it does happen, as rapidly and smoothly as possible.

Borisoff and Victor (Conflict Management: A Communication Skills Approach) advocate the following five steps as essential components of the conflict-management process and assert that these five steps allow for a sustained, ongoing process of problem-solving-oriented conflict-management. They call the following five steps as the "five A's" of conflict management: assessment, acknowledgement, attitude, action, and analysis.

Assessment

Acknowledgement

Attitude

Action

Analysis

1. **Assessment:** Conflict assessment is the first stage in the process of conflict-management and resolution. Conflict assessment is the process of systematic collection of information about the dynamics of a conflict taken up to enable the contending parties gain a deeper understanding of the nature and consequences of the conflict. The assessment maps the conflict, and then uses it as an evaluation tool to determine whether or not there is a reasonable possibility for initiating an intervention process to manage or resolve the dispute.

Assessment Mapping

- Define briefly the issue, the problem area, or conflict in neutral terms that all would agree on and that doesn't invite a "yes/no" answer e.g. "Filing" not "Should Mary do filing?"
- Alongside whom: write down the name of each important person or group.
- Write down each person's or group's needs. What motivates him/her?
- Write down each person's or group's concerns, fears or anxieties.

Issue :			
Who : Needs :	_____ _____ _____ _____	Who : Needs :	_____ _____ _____ _____
Concerns :	_____ _____ _____	Concerns :	_____ _____ _____
Who : Needs :	_____ _____ _____ _____	Who : Needs :	_____ _____ _____ _____
Concerns :	_____ _____ _____	Concerns :	_____ _____ _____

Source: website: http://www.crnhq.org/

1. **Acknowledgement:** The acknowledgement step involves each party hearing out the other party's viewpoint and thus allows both the contending parties to build the empathy needed to reach an amicable and mutually agreeable solution to the problem. The acknowledgement stage is also to demonstrate that each of the parties understands - without necessarily agreeing with - the other party's position. Acknowledgement goes beyond merely responding to what is said; however, it involves actively encouraging the other party to openly communicate its concerns.

2. **Attitude:** The attitude step tries to eliminate the foundation for pseudo-conflict. In the attitude step, one analyzes potentially problematic variations in styles of writing, speaking, and non-verbal mannerisms. Such differences may blur meanings. It is the role of the effective conflict participant to maintain an open mind toward all parties involved.

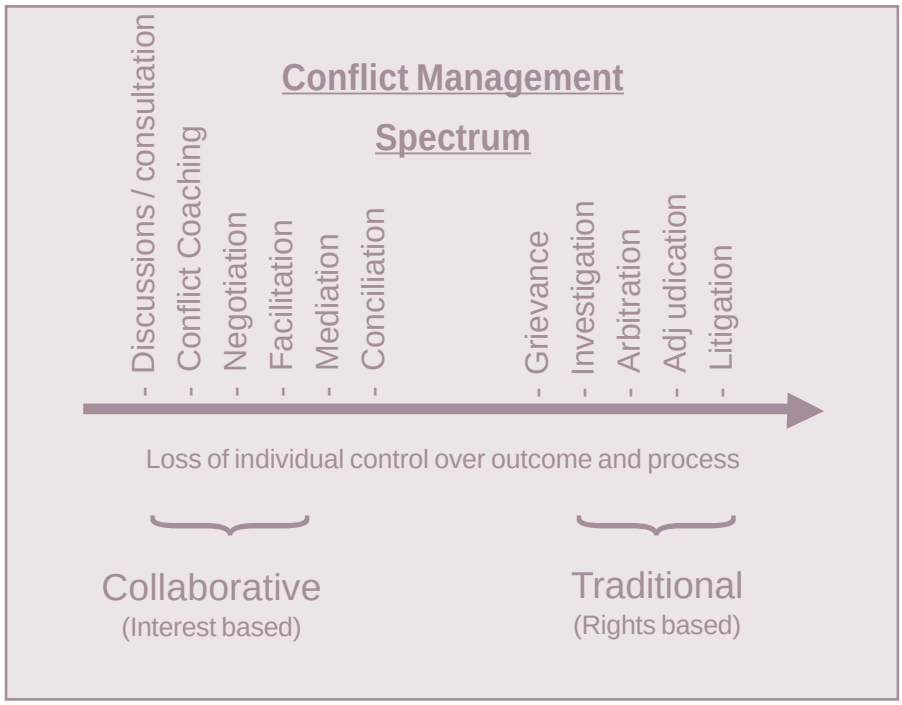
3. **Action:** The action step involves the implementation of the chosen conflict-handling mode. The concerns and interests of the contending parties are solicited, a mutually acceptable solution is arrived at and an environment of trust is created for conflict resolution.

4. **Analysis:** This is the final step in the conflict-management and resolution process wherein the participants decide on what they will do, and then summarize and review what they have agreed upon. The analysis stage initiates the impetus for approaching conflict-management as an ongoing process. Analysis also enables participants to monitor both the results of the conflict resolution.

Conflict-management as a problem-solving device is an ongoing procedure. In its most effective form, it involves continual communication and supervision. As Borisoff and Victor state, “conflict-handling behavior is not a static procedure; rather it is a process that requires flexibility and constant evaluation to be truly productive and effective.” The “Five A’s’ process proposed by them can be used as an effective technique by a manager for problem-solving for a win-win scenario.

11 Spectrum of Conflict-Management Strategies

There are indeed a wide variety of conflict-management options available for managers. The spectrum below ranges from informal/ collaborative processes to more traditional/ processes. The spectrum indicates that the collaborative processes afford the managers greater control over conflicts and positive outcomes as compared to the traditional processes.



The traditional avenues of conflict-management include – grievance, arbitration, adjudication and litigation.

- **Grievance**: A grievance is an official procedure for an employee to complain about matters identified in the collective agreement or to raise an alleged injustice by following the procedure set out in the collective agreement. A grievance may arise from alleged unfair treatment in work assignments, promotion, transfer, discipline, or termination.
- **Arbitration**: Arbitration is an alternative to going to court, to provide settlement of disputes. The parties in conflict can sometimes identify the basis upon which their case will be decided. The solution is decided by an outsider and, depending

on the type of arbitration, the outcome could be imposed by the power of the law. Both parties agree to be bound by the decision of the arbitrator. It's final.

- **Adjudication :** In the adjudication process, at least the parties have an opportunity to present their cases, to be heard, and submit their arguments for why their preferred solution should be the basis upon which the decision is made. Nonetheless, the choice of the solution is made by a third party, and the decision is backed by force (enforced) which ensures that the losing party complies.
- **Litigation:** Litigation is the process of bringing forward or defending a case before a judge or administrative tribunal. Litigation is the preferred method of dispute resolution where all other forms of dispute resolution have been considered and rejected or tried and failed.

The informal or collaborative avenues of conflict-management include –consultation, conflict coaching, negotiation, facilitation, mediation and conciliation.

- **Consultation:** The purpose of a consultation may be to brainstorm to get information about conflicts or to get the perspective of a neutral person not connected to the dispute. Conflict-resolution team is supposed to be knowledgeable about the organization and skilled in conflict resolution. Individual consultations with staff can help employees clarify their interests and identify and evaluate options.
- **Conflict coaching:** Conflict Coaching is one-on-one support to help a person deal with a conflict situation. The coach can help a person identify and develop new practical skills to resolve conflict, replacing less successful ways of dealing with disputes.
- **Negotiation:** Negotiation is the most basic form of dispute resolution and involves two parties interacting directly with each other to arrive at a mutually satisfactory accommodation. In this situation, however, the final choice of the

solution might depend on the relative power position of the adversaries rather than on what might be the most satisfactory solution to everyone involved. The party with the higher bargaining leverage might end up getting the most out of the negotiations.

- **Facilitation:** Facilitation involves a neutral third party that undertakes a convening function to bring together disputants so that they may resolve their dispute. The facilitator's role is normally limited to providing a forum for the parties to interact directly, including the enforcement of very basic rules of communication protocol during discussions and negotiations.

- **Mediation:** Where disputants have reached an impasse in their ability to engage in negotiations, they may resort to mediation. A mediator is a neutral person that interacts with the disputants to engage them in resolving their dispute in a mutually satisfactory manner. The mediator sets ground rules for the parties to interact, engages them in problem-solving, either jointly or through private caucuses, and helps them to reduce any resolution they reach to written form. A mediator may be facilitative, by allowing free play to the parties to reach agreement or not, or the mediator may adopt an evaluative approach by expressing a view in joint session on possible outcomes if the dispute results in subsequent litigation. Mediation is the most common form of dispute resolution using neutral intervention. Where more than one mediator conducts mediation it is sometimes referred to as co-mediation.

- **Conciliation:** Conciliation is a form of alterative dispute resolution that is traditionally mandated by a statute. Compared to mediation, it tends to be a more evaluative than facilitative process. This approach not only tries to find solutions to the issues underlying the conflict but also works to alter the adversaries' relationships from that of resentment and hostility to friendship and harmony. Of course, for this to happen, both parties must be equally interested and participate intensively in the resolution process.

The spectrum is not meant to be all-inclusive. However, it has to be observed that the traditional form of conflict-management is an example of where some of the conflict-management options would be situated on a linear scale. However, an informal/ collaborative conflict management system allows for flexibility and free movement among all of its options, and the passage from one process to another does not have to be sequential.

Conflict resolving counter-tactics

- Ask a question
- Let some hostile remarks pass
- Reframe hostile remarks
- Ask tham to positively rephrase
- Uncover their tactic by telling them you are aware of it
- Write what is being said
- Speak calmly
- Agree to discuss later
- Use humour
- Change tack
- Call time-out
- Show me why that's fair
- Please tell me what you heard me say

12 Conflict-Management Skills Tool Kit

The manager's role is not only to eliminate all conflicts, but also to minimize the anger, grudges, hurt, and blame that they can cause among the employees. Obviously, it requires a set of skills and the tact to deal effectively given the situation. The following are some of the important conflict-management skills laid down by **CBAA Guide to Conflict Resolution Network** as the foundation of constructive conflict-management. (Source – **The conflict Resolution Network – http://www.crnhq.org**)

1. The Win-Win Approach

A win-win problem-solving approach to conflict-management seeks to arrive at solutions that work for both parties. It emphasizes building good working relationships in addition to solving substantive problems. It opens up the conflict for exploration of the root causes of the problems and leads to constructive, sustainable solutions and positive expectations for future encounters.

Through sharing, examining and assessing the reasons for the conflict, it leads to the development of an alternative that is fully acceptable to everyone involved. It enables managers to resolve conflicts, with an emphasis on achieving positive results for everyone involved. A win-win approach rests on strategies involving:

- Understanding the underlying problems
- Acknowledging individual differences
- Analyzing the problem with an open-mind
- Addressing the underlying problem

The following imaginative tale underlines the importance of understanding, acknowledging, analyzing and addressing the underlying needs:

"There are two people in a kitchen. There is only one orange left and both of them want it. What would you expect as the solution? Compromise is one option. They might cut

it in half and each gets half. Let's assume that's what they do. One person now goes to the juicer and starts squeezing herself a rather too small orange juice. The other, with some difficulty, begins to grate the rind of the orange to flavour a cake.

Had they discussed needs rather than heading straight to solutions, they could have both had the equivalent of a whole orange. Their needs were complementary, in fact, not conflicting. With the determination to use a win-win approach, two sets of needs can frequently dovetail together."

The win/win approach is certainly ethical, but the reason for its great success is that it WORKS**.** Where both people win, both are tied to the solution. They feel committed to the plan because it actually suits them. Even when trust between the parties is very limited, the win-win approach can be effective. If there is some doubt about the other person keeping his/ her end of the bargain, you can make the agreement reciprocal. "I'll help you draw up those figures for your reports, if you sort out these invoice queries."

2. Creative Response

A creative response approach is about transforming problems into possibilities. It is about consciously choosing a particular way of dealing with a problem rather than be besieged by the problem. It distinguishes between the perfection-oriented and discovery-oriented attitudes and emphasizes the virtues of the latter. When managers are in the perfection-mode, regardless of the position and power, they end up often feeling that life is a struggle. They use perfection as a yardstick and prefer to live by certain set standards of behavior.

When managers are in a discovery mode, they are spontaneous, curious, fascinated, and appreciative of all that happens. They treat conflicts as potential opportunities. They are fazed by the fear of failure so much that they take risk. The following story at IBM Company is indeed revealing.

"One middle executive there made a tactical error that cost the company $9 million. The following week the executive, sure he was about to be fired, was called into the

office of the Chairman. The Chairman started discussing plans for a huge new projet that he wanted the executive to direct. After a certain point, the executive was feeling so uncomfortable he had to stop the Chairman: “Excuse me, sir, you know I’m amazed. Last week I cost us $9 million. Why are you putting me in charge of this new project? I thought you were going to fire me.” The Chairman smiled. “Fire you? Young man, I’ve just invested $9 million educating you. You’re now one of my most valuable assets.” Here was a chairman who valued the willingness to risk and learn. He knew it was an essential ingredient in the successful executive.”

The great scientist Thomas Edison said: “I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.

3. Empathy

Mart Twain said: “If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two mouths and one ear”. Empathy is an innate human capacity that gives the ability to understand the unique experiences of another person. It connects people with one another on a meaningful and fulfilling level. Learning to listen responsively or ting (the Chinese word for “listening” means attending closely with our “ears, eyes, and a focused heart”) to the sounds, tones, gestures, movements, non-verbal nuances, pauses, and silence in a given situation is an effective way for managers to acquire the skill of empathy.

How do good listening and empathy help?

- It demonstrates a person’s caring attitude toward others
- It helps one understand people better.
- It usually leads conversation towards emotional issues.
- It lets one build a personal rapport with others
- It helps reduce ones irritation with others’ attitude or behavior.
- It helps reduce ones prejudice or negative assumptions about others
- It fosters more meaningful, more helpful, closer friendships.

Here is an acronym to help managers remember if they let their employees know they

are ready to engage in active listening skills:

S - **Squarely** face the person

O - **Open** your posture

L - **Lean** towards the sender

E - **Eye** contact maintained

R - **Relax**

Active listening involves:

Paraphrasing – Paraphrasing is important because it tests a manager's understanding of what he or she heard, and communicates that he or she is trying to understand what is being said.

An example of Paraphrasing is:

Employee: "I just don't understand, one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do that."

Supervisor: "You mean she confuses you."

Clarifying – Clarifying is the process of bringing vague material into sharper focus. Its purpose is to untangle unclear or wrong interpretation, get more information, help the speaker see other points of view, and identify what was said.

An example of Clarifying is: "You've said so much, let me see if I've got it all."

Perception Checking – Perception checking is a request for verification of a manager's perceptions. Its purposes are to give and receive feedback, and to check the assumptions.

An example of perception checking is:"Let me see if I've got it straight. You said that you love your children and that they are very important to you. At the same time you can't stand being with them. Is that what you are saying?"

Summarizing – Summarizing allows managers to pull together, organize, and integrate the major aspects of their dialogue. The purpose of summarizing is to give a sense of

movement and accomplishment in the exchange, establish a basis for further discussion, and pull together major ideas, facts, and feelings.

An example of Summarizing is: “A number of good points have been made about rules for the classroom. Let’s take a few minutes to go over them and write them on the board. We’re going all over the map this morning. If I understand you correctly…”

4. Assertiveness

People basically fall into one of the three types of personalities - passive, aggressive and assertive.

- **Passive Personalities** – These people rarely get involved, do not often complain and frequently exhibit submissive non-verbal communication. This non-verbal communication is demonstrated by the individual talking in a soft voice, having speech hesitation, and lack of eye contact. They usually appear happy in their jobs, but when pushed to the limit their thoughts and emotions can erupt in unpredictable ways.
- **Aggressive Personalities** – Aggressive persons have strong opinions and ideas and are not afraid to express their ideas at the expense of others. They seem like they have a chip on their shoulder and are seen as overbearing and sarcastic….sometimes even rude.
- **Assertive Personalities** – People who are assertive stand up for themselves, express needs or concerns in direct appropriate ways, and always respect the rights of others. They use open body language, maintain eye contact, and are not afraid to ask why.

Being assertive helps managers:

1. reduce stress for them and for those who work with them
2. resolve problems more quickly

3. increase productivity
4. express what they want
5. sort out the relevant and the irrelevant things

If there are two managers with similar skill sets and experience, it is likely to be the more assertive one who is successful. While some managers are naturally more assertive than others, it is possible to learn assertive behaviour which in turn will ensure you are in the frame for new roles and opportunities.

How do managers learn to be appropriately assertive? Edel Jarboe in an article "Speaking Up: How to Be More Assertive" (http://www.selfhelpforher.com), suggests the following 9 ways:

i) Develop a value and belief system, which allows you to assert yourself. In other words, give yourself permission to be angry, to say "No," to ask for help, and to make mistakes.

ii) Avoid using tag questions. ("It's really hot today, isn't it?"), disclaimers ("I may be wrong, but…"), and question statements ("won't you close the door?") all lessen the perceived assertiveness of speech.

iii) Resist giving into interruptions until you have completed your thoughts. (Instead, say - "Just a moment, I haven't finished.")

iv) Stop self-limiting behaviors, such as smiling too much, nodding too much, tilting your head, or dropping your eyes in response to another person's gaze.

v) While saying "No," be decisive. Explain why you are refusing but don't be overly apologetic.

vi) Use "I want" or "I feel" in your statements. Acknowledge the other person's situation or feelings followed by a statement in which you stand up for your rights. E.g., "I know you're X, but I feel…"

vii) Use “I” in your language (this is especially useful for expressing negative feelings.) “I” language helps you focus your anger constructively and to be clear about your own feelings. For example:

a) When you do (Behaviour)

b) The effects are (Results)

c) I feel (Emotion) Remember: Stick to the first person, and avoid “you are”.

viii) Maintain direct eye contact, keep your posture open and relaxed, be sure your facial expression agrees with the message, and keep a level, well-modulated tone of voice.

ix) Listen and let people know that you have heard what they said. Ask questions for clarification.

Practice. Enlist the aid of friends and family and ask for feedback. Tackle less anxiety-evoking situations first. Build up your assertiveness muscle. Don’t get discouraged if you behave non-assertively. Figure out where you went astray and how to improve your handling of the situation next time. Reward yourself each time you’ve pushed yourself to be assertive regardless of whether or not you get the desired results

Find Out if You May Have a Problem with Assertiveness

Do you feel that people often act as if you are not there, or as if they are unaware, or don't care about, your feelings?

Do you sometimes know clearly what you want or think but don't say it, possibly in order to live what you perceive is an "easy life?"

When people offend you, or do things that displease you, do you frequently say "Oh that's okay" but inside feel something completely different?

Do you often say 'yes' to people's requests when you actually want to say 'no?'

Do you find that you often feel angry with yourself but perhaps it is the others that you should be really angry with?

Do you frequently take on extra work yourself, rather than asking someone else?

Do you feel as if you are the one that everyone turns to for help and advice yet find that no one seems to be there for you when *you* need support?

Do you feel angry a lot of the time and does that anger never seem to go away?

Do you frequently get disproportionately angry about little things, often with those closest to you, or let things get out of proportion?

Do you often feel that it is easier to go for a drink (or do other drugs) rather than talk to people about the things that bother you in your relationship with them?

5. Cooperative Power

Cooperative managers can anticipate conflict and solve smouldering conflicts, involving all stakeholders in the decision-making. They come up with solutions that address everyone's interests and are mutually beneficial. This approach to dealing with conflict is characterized by the use of joint problem-solving techniques, respectful communication and the pursuit of win-win solutions. Cooperative management mechanisms can reduce conflict potential by:

- providing a forum for joint negotiations, thus ensuring that all existing and potentially conflicting interests are taken into account during decision making;
- considering different perspectives and interests to reveal new management options and offer win-win solutions;
- building trust and confidence through collaboration and joint fact-finding; and
- making decisions that are much more likely to be accepted by all stakeholders, even if consensus cannot be reached.

When faced with a statement that has potential to create conflict, managers must ask open questions to reframe resistance. They should explore the difficulties and then re-direct discussion to focus on positive possibilities.

EXPLORE - Clarify Details	
It's too expensive.	Compared to what?
Too many/much/little/few.	Compared to what?
I want the best.	What would be best for you?
Find Options	
You can't do that around here.	What would happen if we did?
He (she) would never...	How can we find ways for it to happen?
They always...	Are there times they don't?
We've tried that already.	What was the outcome?
	Yes, that's an option. What else could we consider?
REDIRECT - Move to the Positive	
It will never work.	What would it take to make it work?
I won't...	What would make you willing?
It's a failure.	How could it work?
It's disastrous.	What would make it better?
He's (she's) useless.	What is he (she) doing that is acceptable?
It's impossible.	What would it take to make it possible?
I can't.	You can't see a way to do it at the moment?
I don't want to.	What would you like?
Go Back to Legitimate Needs and Concerns	
He's (she's) a hopeless case!	It's hard to see how one would work with him/her?
You fool (and other insults)!	What do we need to do to sort this out?
How dare you do such a thing!	What do you dislike about it?
It should be done my way.	What makes that seem the best option?
His/her place is a pig's sty!	He/she puts a different emphasis on tidiness to you?
He/she doesn't do their fair share.	Where do you think his/her priorities may lie?

Source: Conflict Resolution Network website: http://www.crnhq.org/

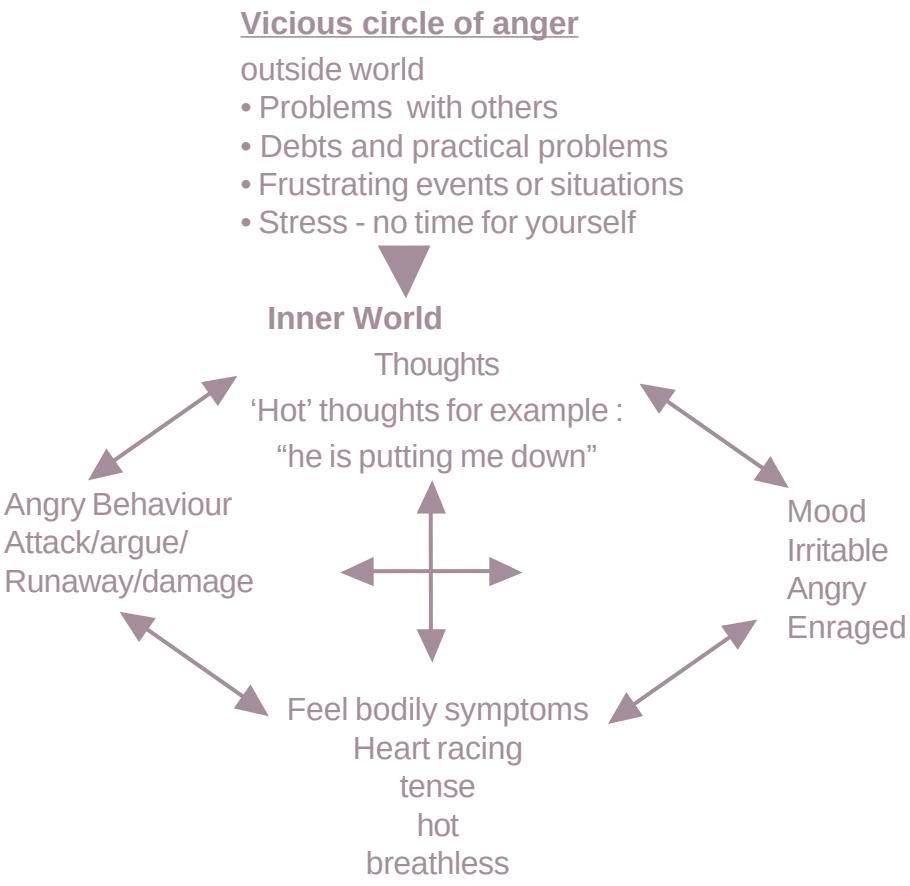
6. Managing Emotions

Emotions are psychological feelings that people have that usually result from, and contribute to, a conflict. Examples are anger, shame, fear, distrust, and a sense of powerlessness. These emotions often mask the substantive issue of conflict. If emotions are effectively managed, they can become a resource for effective conflict resolution. If they are not effectively managed, however, they can intensify a conflict, heightening tensions and making the situation more difficult to resolve. Managers must not let their feelings and emotions impact how they deal with a conflict. Conflict Research Consortium of Colorado, USA (Managing Strong Emotions) suggests the following techniques for managing emotions:

- Recognize and understand your own emotions as well as your opponents'. For instance, is your opponent angry, or just excited? Are you slightly worried, or profoundly afraid?
- Determine the source of the feelings. Are your (or your opponent's) emotional responses to one issue being caused by your (or their) response to another issue? Is your (or their) anger or distrust caused by a bad experience in the past, rather than something that is occurring now?
- Talk about feelings—yours and your opponents'. Don't suppress them, or deny them—acknowledge them and deal with them directly.
- Express your own feelings in a non-confrontational way. This can be done, for example, by using I-messages, where you say "I feel angry because. . ." rather than "You made me angry by. . ." The first approach explains your feelings without accusing anyone else, while the second focuses blame on the opponent who is likely to become hostile or defensive in response.
- Acknowledge your opponents' feelings as legitimate. Although you may feel differently about a situation, your opponents' feelings are real, and denying their existence or validity is just likely to intensify those feelings. Allowing them to be expressed and recognized helps them release those feelings so that you can move on to deal with the substantive issues in dispute.

- Do not react emotionally to emotional outbursts. You should acknowledge the outburst with active listening (which shows that you understand the strength of the speaker's feelings), but you should not react emotionally yourself, as that will likely escalate the emotions and the conflict as a whole. If you are having trouble staying calm, temporarily leave the room.

- Use symbolic gestures. Gestures such as apologies, sympathy notes, shared meals, or even handshakes can be very useful in expressing respect and defusing negative emotions at little cost.



MANAGING EMOTIONS – HANDLING ONESELF

FIVE QUESTIONS

When angry/hurt/frightened:

Why am I feeling so angry/ hurt/ frightened?

What do I want to change?

What do I need in order to let go of this feeling?

Whose problem is this, really? How much is mine? How much is theirs?

What is the unspoken message I infer from the situation? (e.g. they don't like me, they don't respect me.)

FIVE GOALS

In communicating emotions:

Aim to avoid the desire to punish or blame.
Action?

_____

_____

Aim to improve the situation.
Action?

_____

_____

Aim to communicate appropriately your feelings.
Action?

_____

_____

Aim to improve the relationship and increase communication.
Action?

_____

_____

Aim to avoid repeating the same situation.
Action?

_____

_____

If communication is not appropriate, what other action can I take?

MANAGING EMOTIONS – HANDLING OTHERS		
Difficult Behaviour (and the Faulty Belief Behind It)	**The Downward Spiral**	**Better Alternatives**
Seeking Attention ("I only belong when I am being noticed."),	You feel annoyed and react by coaxing. They stop briefly, and then resume behaviour and demands, perhaps in a new way.	Avoid undue attention. Give attention for positive behaviour especially when they are not making a bid for it. Support their real contribution and involvement.
Power Plays ("I only belong when I am in control, when no-one can boss me!"),	You feel provoked or threatened and react by fighting or giving in. Their aggression is intensified or they comply defiantly.	Disengage from the struggle. Help them to use power constructively by enlisting co-operation. Support their self-worth and autonomy.
Seeking Revenge ("I am significant only if I make others feel hurt like I do.")	You feel hurt by them, and retaliate. They seek further revenge more strongly or with another weapon.	Convince them that you respect their needs. Build trusting relationships. Support their need for justice and fairness.
Appear Inadequate ("I won't be hurt any more, only if I can convince others not to expect much from me.")	You give up, overwhelmed. They respond passively, show no improvement, and stay "victim".	Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Focus on assets. Provide bite-sized learning experiences they can succeed at. Support how they feel as a starting place for self-improvement.

Source: Conflict Resolution Network website: http://www.crnhq.org/

7. Negotiation Skills

Effective negotiation is an essential skill that rests on the five fundamental principles of:

- Being hard on the problem and soft on the person
- Focusing on needs, not positions
- Emphasizing common ground
- Being inventive about options
- Making clear agreements

Managers must consider not only their needs but also those of others. They should consider outcomes that would address more of what both the contending parties want. They should commit themselves to a win-win approach, even if tactics used by the other person seem unfair. They should be clear that their task would be to steer the negotiation in a positive direction.

To do so you may need to do some of the following:

- **Reframe**: Ask a question to reframe the same. (e.g. “If we succeed in resolving this problem, what differences would you notice?” Request them to repeat to check what they understood. (“Please tell me what you heard me/ them saying.”) Request something s/he said to be re-stated more positively, or as an “I” statement. Re-interpret an attack on the person as an attack on the issue.
- **Respond but do not react:**
    - Manage your emotions.
    - Let some accusations, attacks, threats or ultimatums pass.
    - Make it possible for the other party to back down without feeling humiliated (e.g. by identifying changed circumstances which could justify a changed position on the issue.)

- **Re-focus on the issue**: Maintain the relationship and try to resolve the issue. (e.g. “What’s fair for both of us?” Summarise how far you’ve got. Review common ground and agreement so far. Focus on being partners solving the problem, not opponents. Divide the issue into parts. Address a less difficult aspect when stuck. Invite trading (“If you will, then I will”) Explore best and worst alternatives to negotiating an acceptable agreement between you.
- **Identify unfair tactics**: Name the behavior as a tactic. Address the motive for using the tactic. Change the physical circumstances. Have a break. Change locations, seating arrangements etc. Go into smaller groups. Meet privately. Call for meeting to end now and resume later, perhaps “to give an opportunity for reflection”.

8. Mediation Skills

Mediation is a voluntary, guided process where an impartial mediator helps the parties to negotiate. The process is not binding unless or until the parties reach agreement, after which the final agreement can be enforced as a contract. While mediation cannot guarantee specific results, there are trends that are characteristic of mediation. Below is a list of some of the benefits of mediation, broadly considered. Mediation generally produces or promotes:

- Economical Decisions
- Rapid Settlements
- Mutually Satisfactory Outcomes
- High Rate of Compliance
- Comprehensive and Customized Agreements
- Greater Degree of Control and Predictability of Outcome
- Preservation of an Ongoing Relationship or Termination of a Relationship in a More Amicable Way
- Workable and Implementable Decisions

Attitudes for Mediators

The following attitudes are relevant whenever you want to advise, in a conflict which is not your own. It may be a friend telling you about a problem on the telephone. It may be an informal chat with both conflicting people. It may be a formally organized mediation session.

- **Be objective** - validate both sides, even if privately you prefer one point of view, or even when only one party is present.
- **Be supportive** - use caring language. Provide a non-threatening learning environment, where people will feel safe to open up.
- **No judging** - Actively discourage judgements as to who was right and who was wrong. Don't ask "Why did you?" Ask "What happened?" and "How did you feel?"
- **Steer process** - Not content! use astute questioning. Encourage suggestions from participants. Resist advising. If your suggestions are really needed, offer as options not directives.
- **Win/win** - Work towards wins for both sides. Turn opponents into problem-solving partners.

Mediation Methods

- Use the simple, yet effective rules from the "Fighting Fair" poster.
- Define your mediator role there as the one to support both people "winning".
- Get agreement from both people about a basic willingness to fix the problem.
- Let each person say what the problem is for them. Check back that the other person has actually understood them.
- Guide the conversation towards a joint problem-solving approach and away from personal attack.

- Encourage them to look for answers where everybody gets what they need.
- Redirect “Fouls” (name calling, put downs, sneering, blaming, threatening, bringing up the past, making excuses, not listening, getting even). Whereever possible you reframe the negative statement into a neutral description of a legitimate present time concern.

Steps in Mediation

- **Open**

  Introductions and agreements, warm-up, explanations, agenda if known.

- **Establish**

  (i) Overview: What is the matter? Each person to express his/her view of the conflict, the issues and his/her feelings

  (ii) Details: What is involved? More details of needs and concerns. Clarify misperceptions. Identify other relevant issues. Mirroring if needed.

- **Move**

  (i) Where are they now? Identify areas of agreement. Encourage willingness to move forward. Caucus if needed.

  (ii) Negotiation: Focus on future action. How would they like it to be? What would that take? Develop options. Trading - build wins for everyone.

- **Close**

  Completion: Contracting; plans for the future including appointed time to review agreement; closing statements.

Apart from those skills advocated by Conflict Resolution Network, there are two other important conflict-management skills that managers need to cultivate effectively when dealing with conflicts. Advocated in the context of intercultural conflicts by Stella Ting-Toomey (Intercultural Conflict Management – A Mindful Approach) they are no less relevant in the scenario of interpersonal or inter-group conflicts

9. Face-Management Skills

Managers should learn to cultivate face-management skills in dealing with interpersonal and inter-group negotiations competently. Face-management skills address the fundamental issue of self-esteem. All human beings like to be respected and be approved of in their daily interactions. However, how they behaviorally show such self-respect needs and concerns as well as how others accord them respect and dignity very likely differ from one context to the next. Now 'giving face' means not humiliating others, especially one's opponents, in public. Individualists may want to learn to "give face" to the collectivists in the conflict negotiation process. It also means acknowledging collectivists' interpersonal and inter-group concerns and obligations. Collectivists, on the other hand, may want to reorient 'face-work' concerns and learn to pay more attention to the substantive issues at stake.

Collectivists may also want to recognize that individualists often separate substantive issues from socio-emotional issues in conflict. Conversely, individualists may want to pay more attention to the interrelationship between substantive issues and face-work/relational issues when negotiating disagreements with collectivists. Thus, although the concern for face maintenance is universal, how we manage face issues is a cultural-specific phenomenon.

10. Trust-Building Skills

Another skill that is critical in effective conflict management is that of trust-building. Trust is a core psychological and interpersonal issue. Trust building activities can break down barriers and build deep feelings of trust and reliance between individuals and within small groups. Trust building activities help people to develop mutual respect, openness, understanding, and empathy, as well as helping to develop communication and teamwork skills. If conflict parties do not trust each other, they tend to move away - cognitively, affectively, and physically - from each other rather than collaborate with each other in the negotiations.

Trust is often viewed as the single most important element of a good working relationship. Trust-building is both a mindset and a communication skill. Especially in conflict situations, when people experience high anxieties with unfamiliar behavior (e.g., accent, nonverbal gestures etc.), they may automatically withhold trust. Well-founded trust is critical in any effective and appropriate management of conflicts.

Conclusion

Conflict between and among group members at the workplace can be thus negative or positive, depending upon a manager's perceptions. Unresolved conflict produces dysfunctional (negative) outcomes for the group. Managers require all the skills discussed above and tact to minimize the adverse repercussions of conflicts and transform problems into possibilities. This toolkit is just a guide and it has its limitations because no situations are similar. Each problem owes its complexity to the context it originated from and takes the shape as it is given by its owners.

Philip Knight says:

"There is an immutable conflict at work in life and in business, a constant battle between peace and chaos. Neither can be mastered, but both can be influenced. How you go about that is the key to success."

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